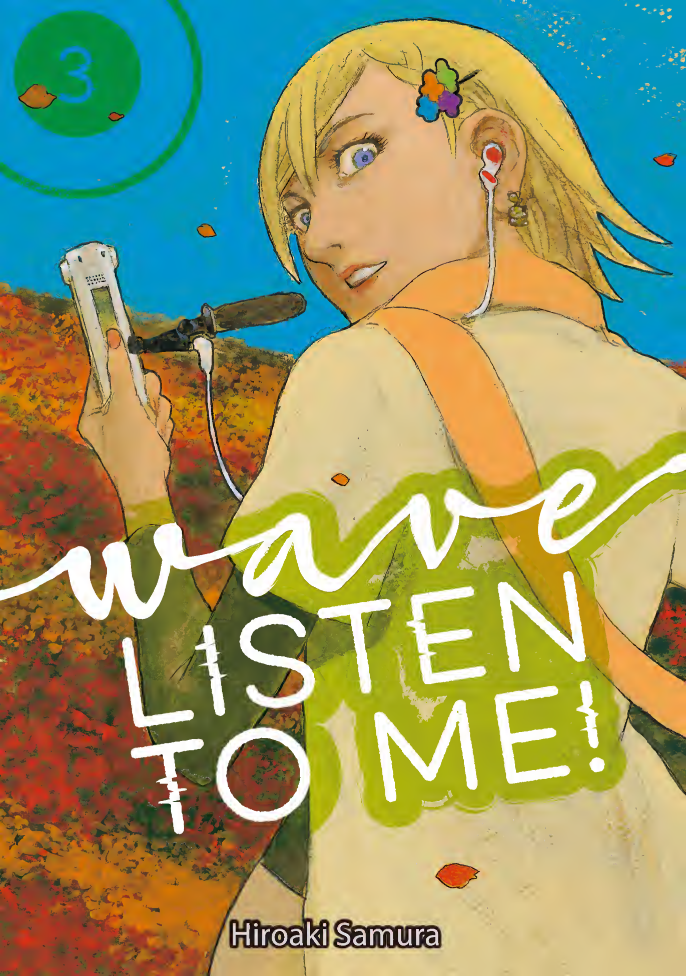


3

wave LISTEN TO ME!

Hiroaki Samura

HIROAKI SAMURA

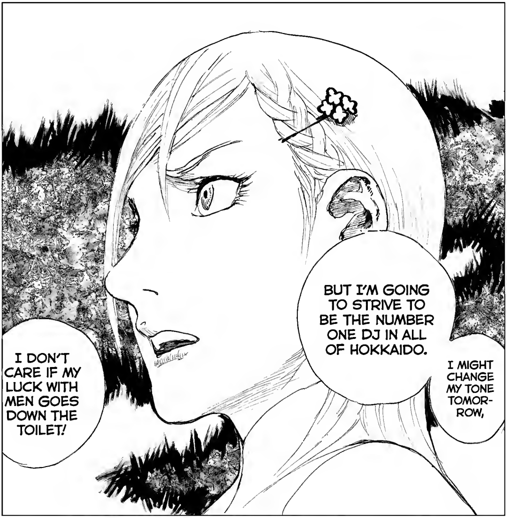
3

wave

LISTEN TO ME!

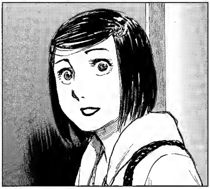
STORY & CAST

Sapporo, Hokkaido. One night at a bar, Minare Koda has her heartbroken ramblings secretly recorded by a local FM radio station director, Mato, who then airs the audio over the air the following day. Minare storms into the station, only to then be duped by Mato into doing an impromptu talk show explaining her harsh dialogue. As it turns out, the segment was a hit, leading to Minare getting her own show. Her first broadcast, a fictitious play-by-play centered around the murder of an ex-boyfriend who left her, was well received. And now for her second broadcast, an audio drama themed after a burial in the dead of night…


I MIGHT CHANGE MY TONE TOMORROW,
BUT I'M GOING TO STRIVE TO BE THE NUMBER ONE DJ IN ALL OF HOKKAIDO.
I DON'T CARE IF MY LUCK WITH MEN GOES DOWN THE TOILET!

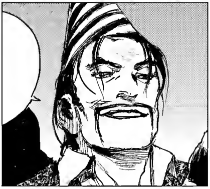
Minare Koda

The protagonist. Kushiro-born Sapporo resident. Currently 25 and single. Her day job is working as a waitress at the soup curry restaurant VOYAGER, but with her termination over the horizon, she's scrambling to make a living as a radio DJ.



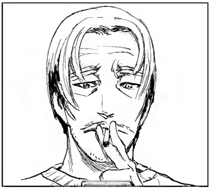
Mizuho Nanba

Assistant director at MRS. Currently letting Minare stay with her after she was kicked out of her apartment. Virgin.



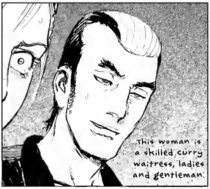
Kanetsugu Mato

Director of FM station "Moiwayama Radio" (MRS). Saw potential in Minare's conversational ability and scouted her for the radio business.



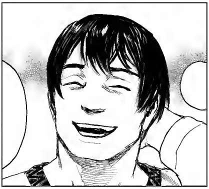
Katsumi Kureko

A scriptwriter for MRS and a veteran of the industry. Supposedly goes way back with Mato.


This woman is a skilled curry waitress, ladies and gentleman.

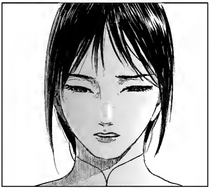
Chuuya Nakahara

An employee at VOYAGER. Supposedly in love with Minare, but invited Makie to stay at his place.



Mitsuo

Minare's audacious ex-boyfriend who swindled her out of 500,000 yen before vanishing without a trace. Recently contacted Minare again to try to patch things up. Fukuoka-born

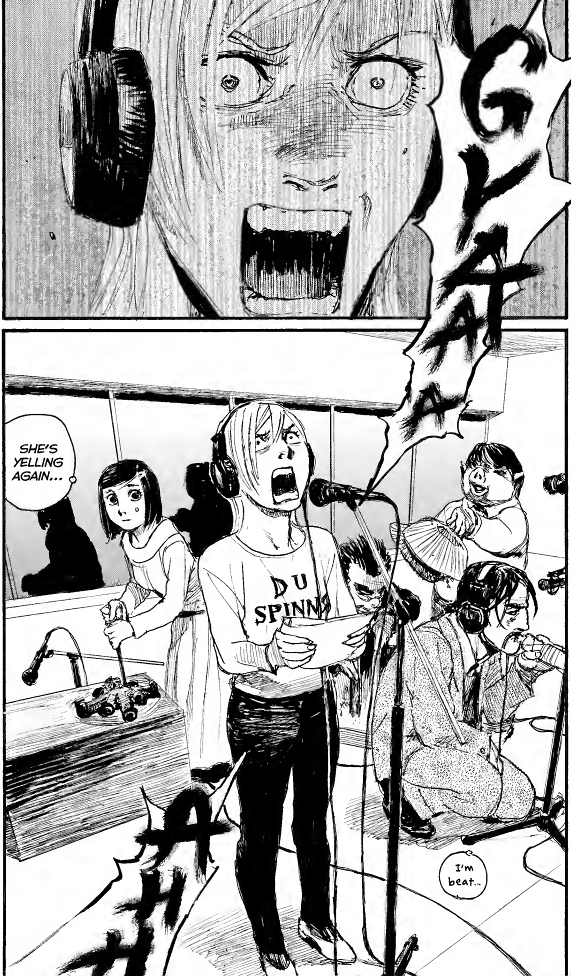


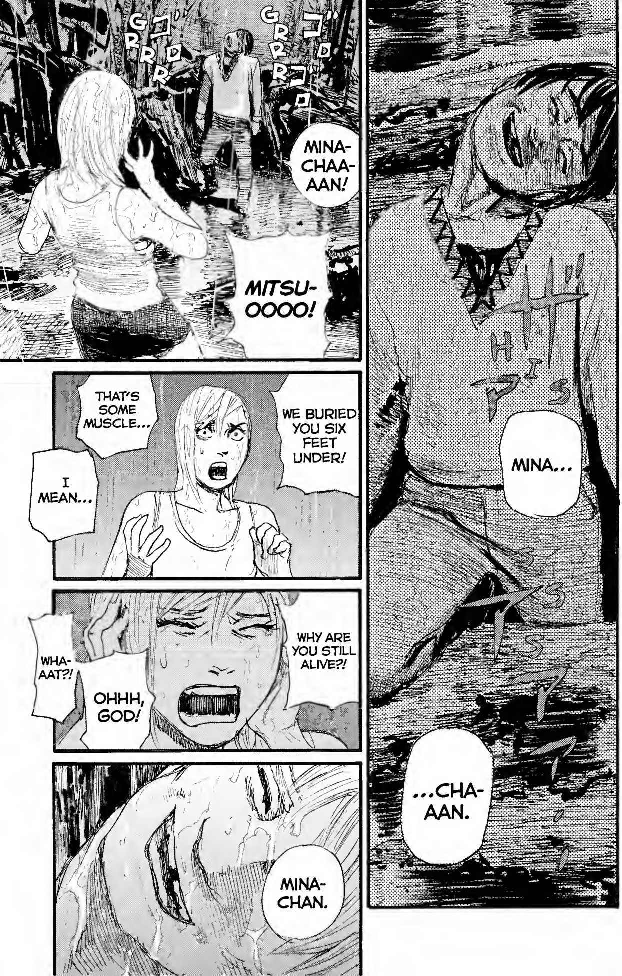
Makie Tachibana

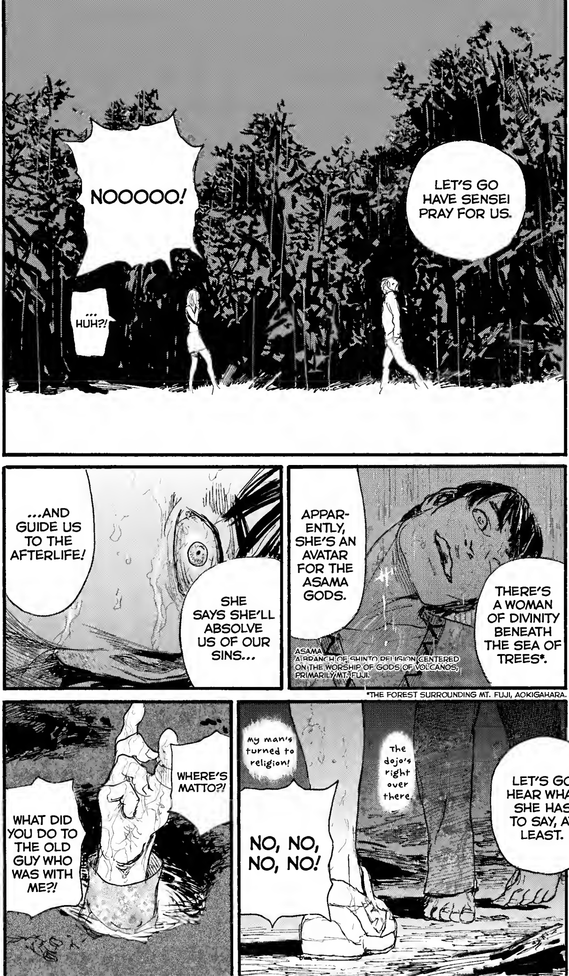
A beautiful woman working at VOYAGER to help pay for the car accident caused by her brother. Not the most skilled swordsman in the manga, nor a prostitute.

Chapter 17 ◆ 「ANAEROBES FEAR NOTHING.」 005
Chapter 18 ◆ 「IT'S MY DUTY.」 027
Chapter 19 ◆ 「I WANT TO WARM YOU.」 049
Chapter 20 ◆ 「THEY DON'T EXIST.」 069
Chapter 21 ◆ 「STEAM IS UNCONCEALABLE.」 091
Chapter 22 ◆ 「I WANT TO CRY.」 107
Chapter 23 ◆ 「I WANT TO SUPPORT YOU.」 129
Chapter 24 ◆ 「YAKITORI MUST NEVER BE REMOVED.」 151

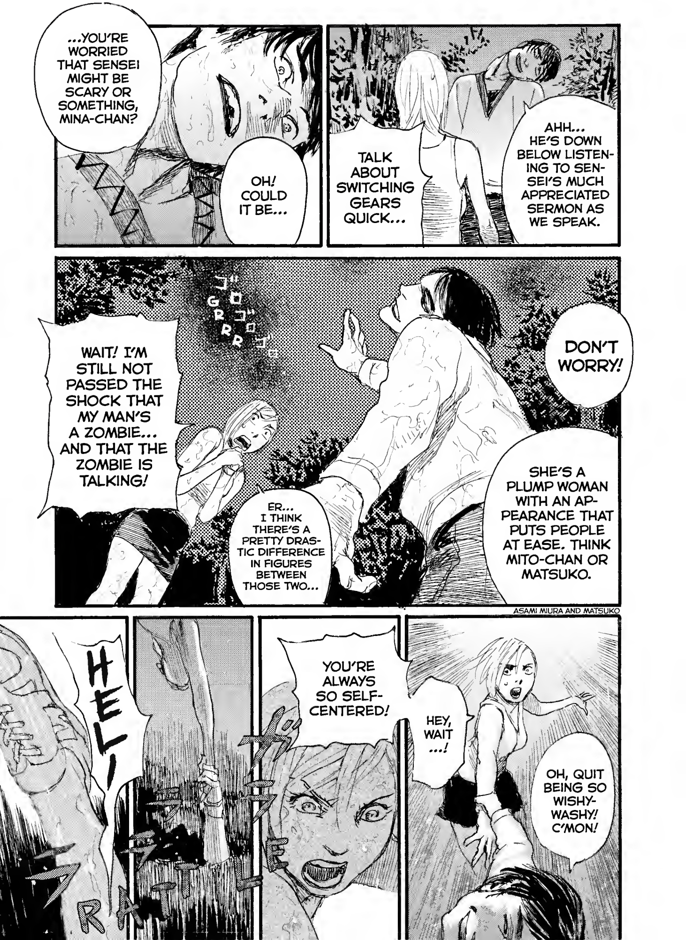
Chapter 17 「ANAEROBES FEAR NOTHING.」


GYAAA
SHE'S YELLING AGAIN...
DU SPINNS
I'm beat...

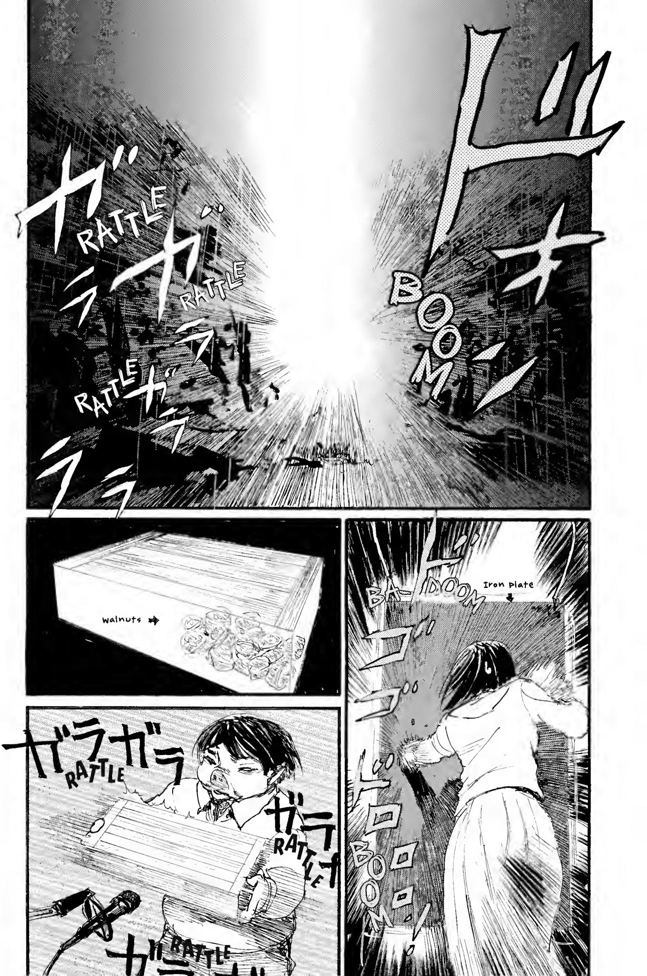

HISS
SSS
MINA...
...CHA-AAN.
GRRRR ゴロ
GRRRR ゴロゴロ
MINA-CHAAAAN!
MITSU-OOOO!
WE BURIED YOU SIX FEET UNDER!
THAT'S SOME MUSCLE...
I MEAN...
WHY ARE YOU STILL ALIVE?!
OHHH, GOD!
WHA-AAT?!
MINA-CHAN.

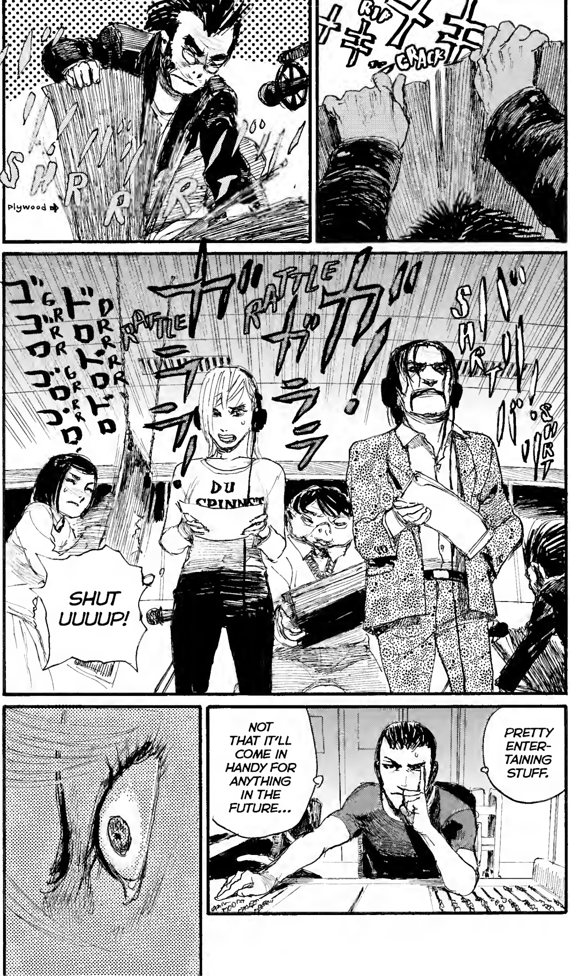

LET'S GO HAVE SENSEI PRAY FOR US.
NOOOOO!
... HUH?!
THERE'S A WOMAN OF DIVINITY BENEATH THE SEA OF TREES*.
APPARENTLY, SHE'S AN AVATAR FOR THE ASAMA GODS.
ASAMA A BRANCH OF SHINTO RELIGION CENTERED ON THE WORSHIP OF GODS OF VOLCANOS, PRIMARILY MT. FUJI.
SHE SAYS SHE'LL ABSOLVE US OF OUR SINS...
...AND GUIDE US TO THE AFTERLIFE!
LET'S GO HEAR WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY, AT LEAST.
The dojo's right over there.
My man's turned to religion!
NO, NO, NO, NO!
WHERE'S MATTO?!
WHAT DID YOU DO TO THE OLD GUY WHO WAS WITH ME?!

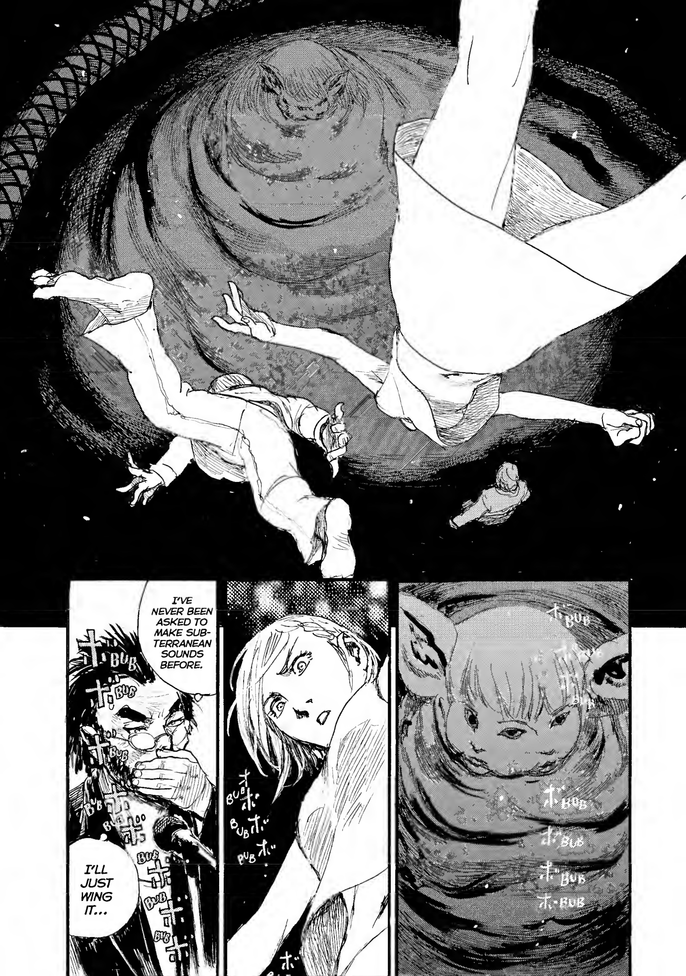
*THE FOREST SURROUNDING MT. FUJI, AOKIGAHARA.

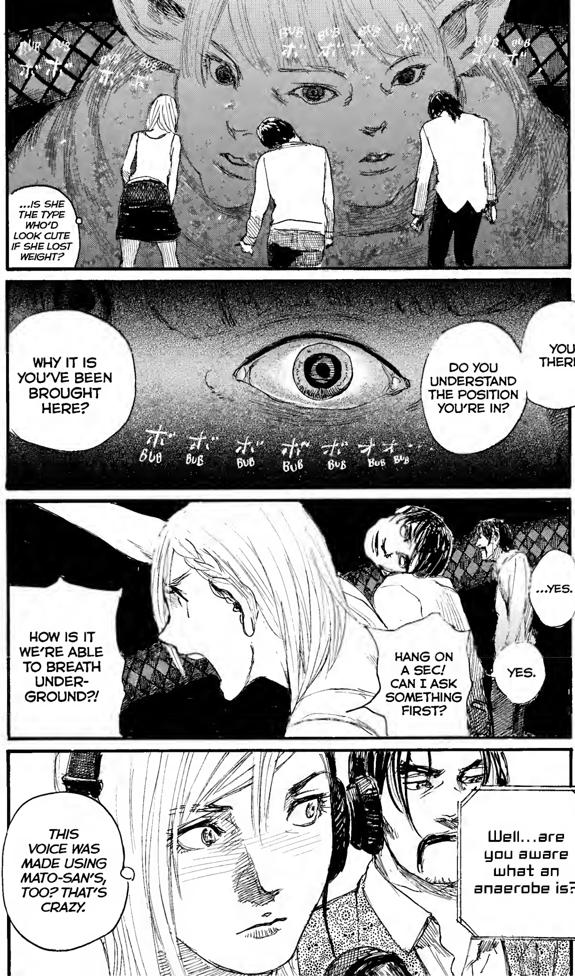

AHH... HE'S DOWN BELOW LISTENING TO SENSEI'S MUCH APPRECIATED SERMON AS WE SPEAK.
TALK ABOUT SWITCHING GEARS QUICK...
OH! COULD IT BE...
...YOU'RE WORRIED THAT SENSEI MIGHT BE SCARY OR SOMETHING, MINA-CHAN?
DON'T WORRY!
SHE'S A PLUMP WOMAN WITH AN APPEARANCE THAT PUTS PEOPLE AT EASE. THINK MITO-CHAN OR MATSUKO.
ER... I THINK THERE'S A PRETTY DRASTIC DIFFERENCE IN FIGURES BETWEEN THOSE TWO...
ゴロゴロゴロ GRRR
WAIT! I'M STILL NOT PASSED THE SHOCK THAT MY MAN'S A ZOMBIE... AND THAT THE ZOMBIE IS TALKING!
OH, QUIT BEING SO WISHY-WASHY! C'MON!
HEY, WAIT...!
YOU'RE ALWAYS SO SELF-CENTERED!
ザザ RATTLE
HEL-

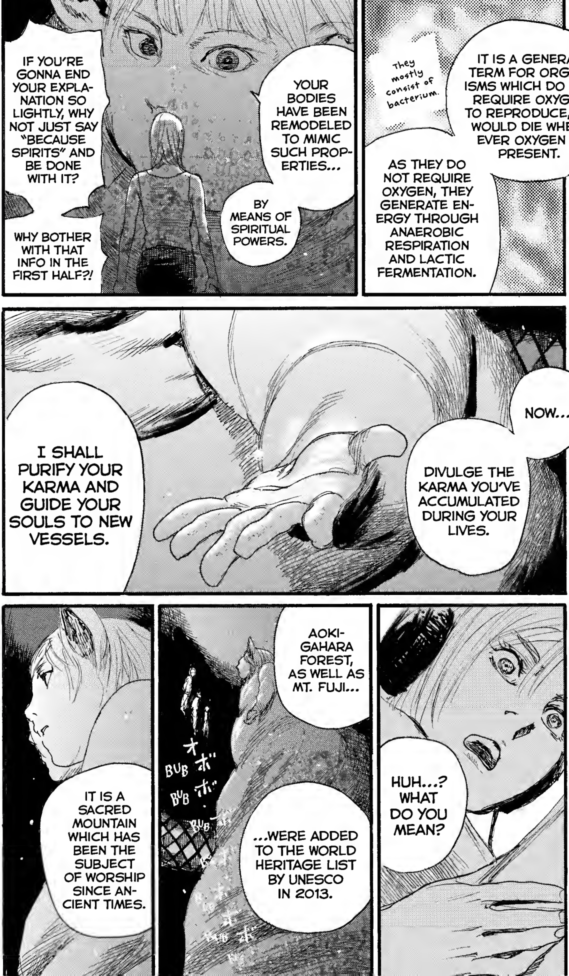
ASAMI MIURA AND MATSUKO

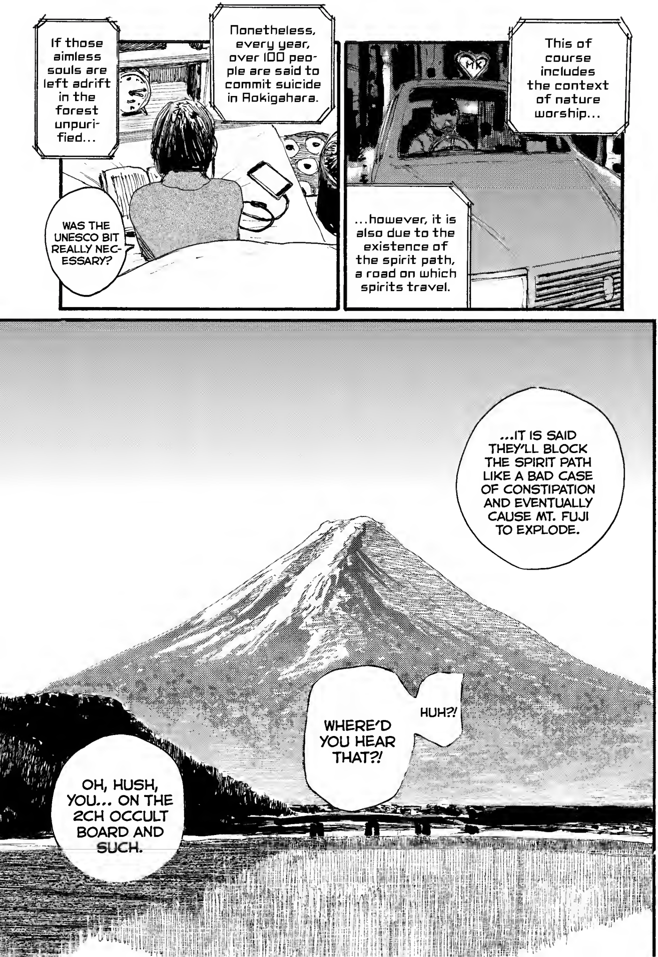

ドォン
BOOM
ガラガラガラガラ
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
ド
BA-DOOM
Iron plate
ゴゴドロロロ!
BOOM!
Walnuts
ガラガラ
RATTLE
ガラ
RATTLE
RATTLE
ガラ

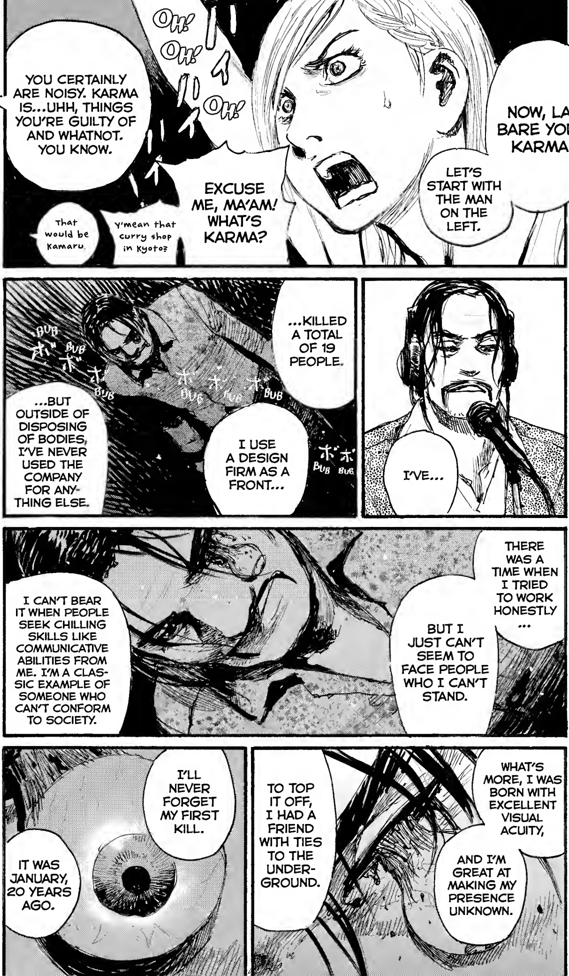

RIP
CRACK
SHRRRT
Plywood
GRDR GRDR DRDR
RATTLE
RATTLE
SHRRT
SHRRT
SHUT UUUUP!
PRETTY ENTERTAINING STUFF.
NOT THAT IT'LL COME IN HANDY FOR ANYTHING IN THE FUTURE...

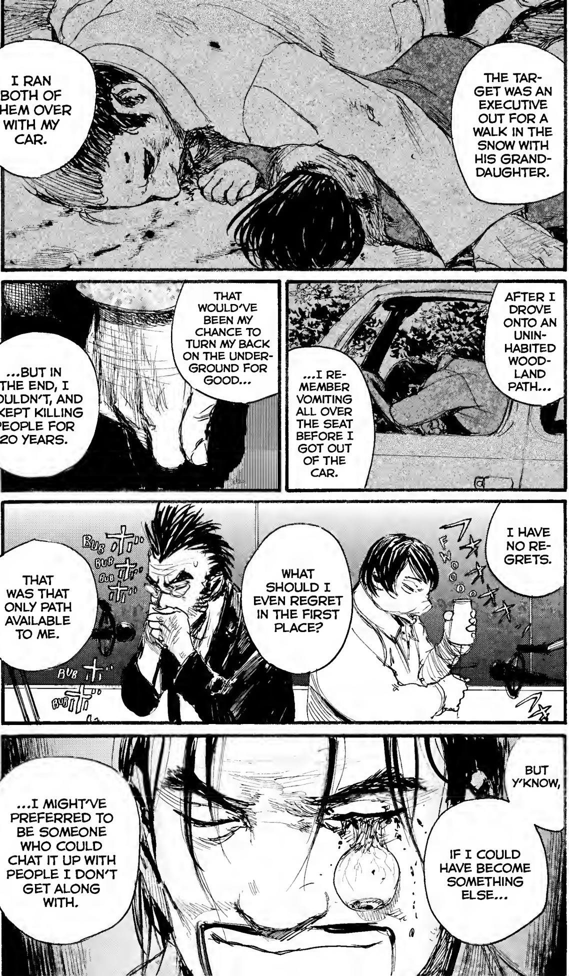

ボBUB
ボBUB
ボBUB
ボBUB
ボBUB
ボBUB
ボ・BUB
BUBオボ
BUBボ
BUBボ
PUBボ
I'VE NEVER BEEN ASKED TO MAKE SUB-TERRANEAN SOUNDS BEFORE.
ボBUB
ボBUB
ボBUB
BUBボ
BUBボ
BUBボ
BUBボ
BUBボ
I'LL JUST WING IT...

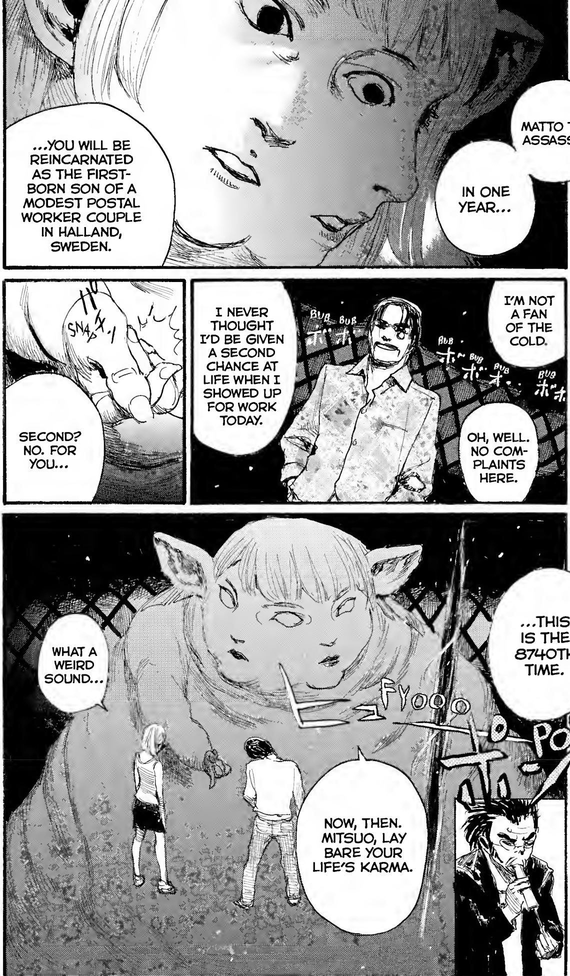

BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB
ボ ボ ボ ボ ボ ボ オ
...IS SHE THE TYPE WHO'D LOOK CUTE IF SHE LOST WEIGHT?
YOU THERE.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE POSITION YOU'RE IN?
WHY IT IS YOU'VE BEEN BROUGHT HERE?
ボ ボ ボ ボ ボ オ オ…
BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB
...YES.
YES.
HANG ON A SEC! CAN I ASK SOMETHING FIRST?
HOW IS IT WE'RE ABLE TO BREATH UNDER-GROUND?!
Well...are you aware what an anaerobe is?
THIS VOICE WAS MADE USING MATO-SAN'S, TOO? THAT'S CRAZY.

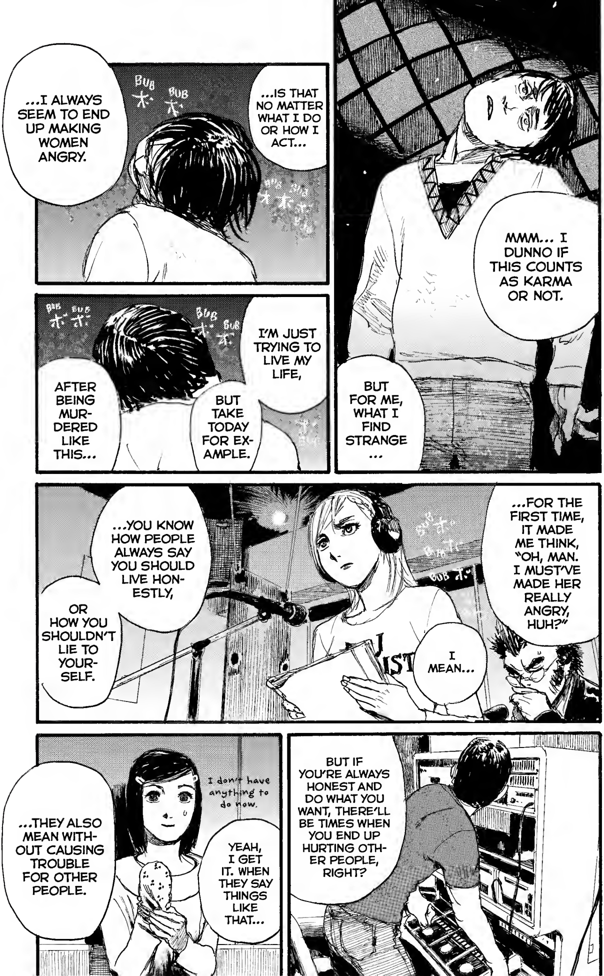

They mostly consist of bacterium.
IT IS A GENERAL TERM FOR ORGANISMS WHICH DO NOT REQUIRE OXYGEN TO REPRODUCE, OR WOULD DIE WHEREVER OXYGEN IS PRESENT.
AS THEY DO NOT REQUIRE OXYGEN, THEY GENERATE ENERGY THROUGH ANAEROBIC RESPIRATION AND LACTIC FERMENTATION.
YOUR BODIES HAVE BEEN REMODELED TO MIMIC SUCH PROPERTIES...
BY MEANS OF SPIRITUAL POWERS.
IF YOU'RE GONNA END YOUR EXPLANATION SO LIGHTLY, WHY NOT JUST SAY "BECAUSE SPIRITS" AND BE DONE WITH IT?
WHY BOTHER WITH THAT INFO IN THE FIRST HALF?!
NOW...
DIVULGE THE KARMA YOU'VE ACCUMULATED DURING YOUR LIVES.
I SHALL PURIFY YOUR KARMA AND GUIDE YOUR SOULS TO NEW VESSELS.
HUH...? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
AOKI-GAHARA FOREST, AS WELL AS MT. FUJI...
...WERE ADDED TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST BY UNESCO IN 2013.
オボ BUB ボ BUB ボ BUB
IT IS A SACRED MOUNTAIN WHICH HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF WORSHIP SINCE ANCIENT TIMES.

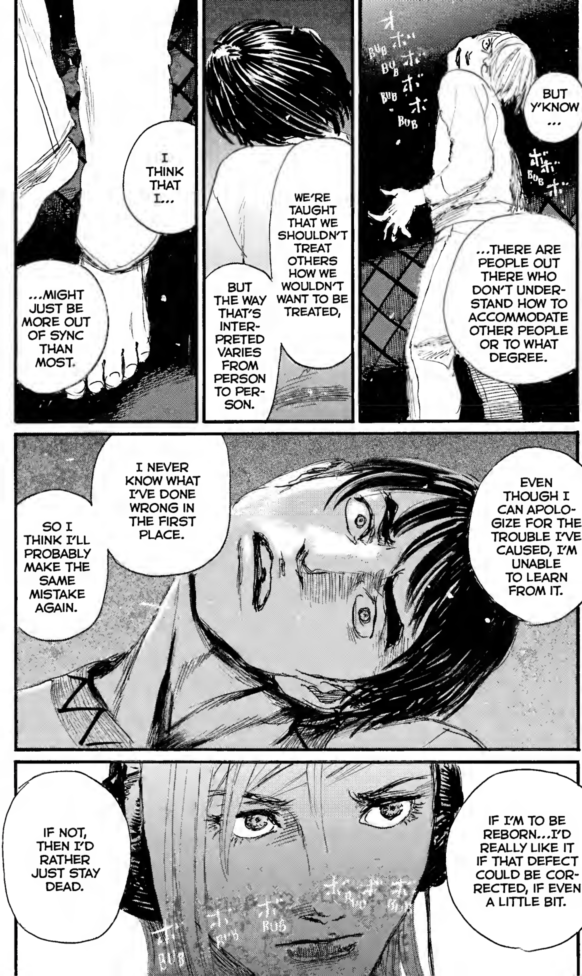

This of course includes the context of nature worship...
...however, it is also due to the existence of the spirit path, a road on which spirits travel.
Nonetheless, every year, over 100 people are said to commit suicide in Aokigahara.
If those aimless souls are left adrift in the forest unpurified...
WAS THE UNESCO BIT REALLY NECESSARY?
...IT IS SAID THEY'LL BLOCK THE SPIRIT PATH LIKE A BAD CASE OF CONSTIPATION AND EVENTUALLY CAUSE MT. FUJI TO EXPLODE.
HUH?!
WHERE'D YOU HEAR THAT?!
OH, HUSH, YOU... ON THE 2CH OCCULT BOARD AND SUCH.

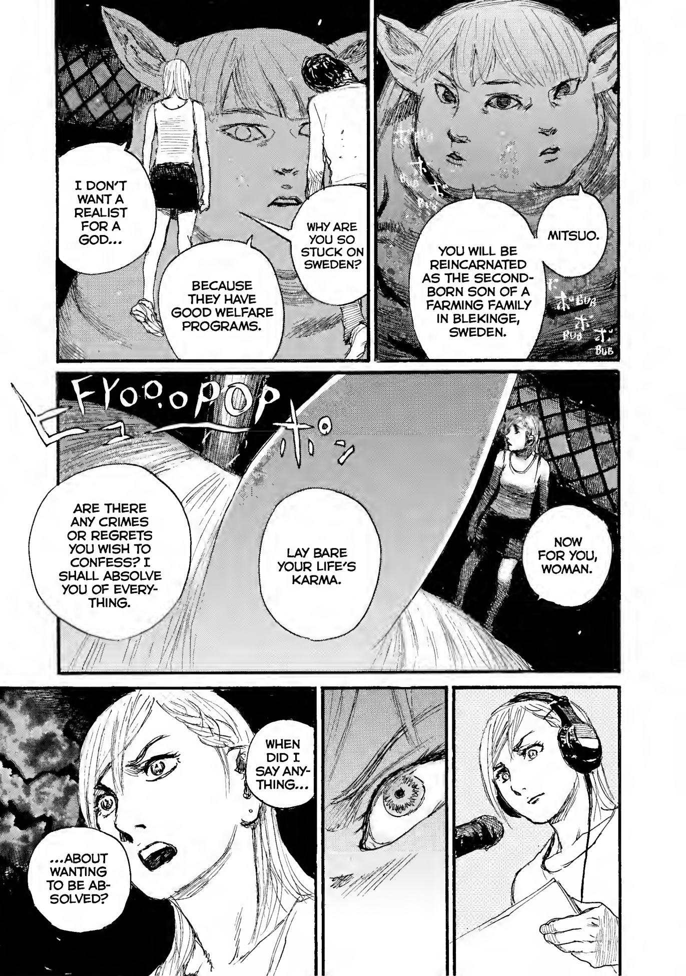

NOW, LAY BARE YOUR KARMA!
LET'S START WITH THE MAN ON THE LEFT.
OH! OH! OH!
EXCUSE ME, MA'AM! WHAT'S KARMA?
Y'mean that curry shop in Kyoto?
That would be Kamaru.
YOU CERTAINLY ARE NOISY. KARMA IS...UHH, THINGS YOU'RE GUILTY OF AND WHATNOT. YOU KNOW.
I'VE...
...KILLED A TOTAL OF 19 PEOPLE.
BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB BUB
I USE A DESIGN FIRM AS A FRONT...
...BUT OUTSIDE OF DISPOSING OF BODIES, I'VE NEVER USED THE COMPANY FOR ANYTHING ELSE.
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I TRIED TO WORK HONESTLY...
BUT I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO FACE PEOPLE WHO I CAN'T STAND.
I CAN'T BEAR IT WHEN PEOPLE SEEK CHILLING SKILLS LIKE COMMUNICATIVE ABILITIES FROM ME. I'M A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF SOMEONE WHO CAN'T CONFORM TO SOCIETY.
WHAT'S MORE, I WAS BORN WITH EXCELLENT VISUAL ACUITY,
AND I'M GREAT AT MAKING MY PRESENCE UNKNOWN.
TO TOP IT OFF, I HAD A FRIEND WITH TIES TO THE UNDERGROUND.
I'LL NEVER FORGET MY FIRST KILL.
IT WAS JANUARY, 20 YEARS AGO.

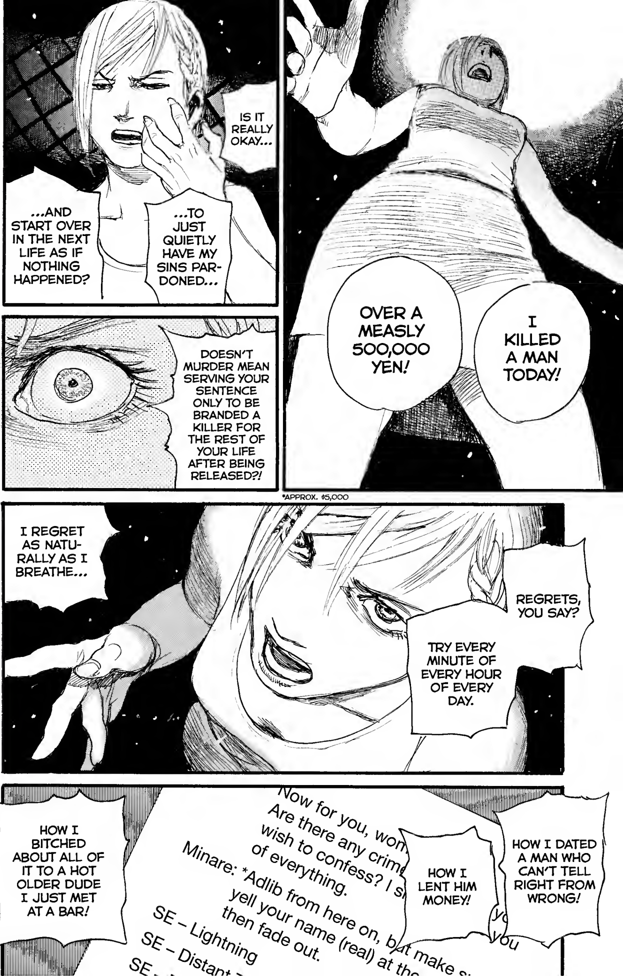

THE TARGET WAS AN EXECUTIVE OUT FOR A WALK IN THE SNOW WITH HIS GRANDDAUGHTER.
I RAN BOTH OF THEM OVER WITH MY CAR.
AFTER I DROVE ONTO AN UNINHABITED WOODLAND PATH...
...I REMEMBER VOMITING ALL OVER THE SEAT BEFORE I GOT OUT OF THE CAR.
THAT WOULD'VE BEEN MY CHANCE TO TURN MY BACK ON THE UNDERGROUND FOR GOOD...
...BUT IN THE END, I COULDN'T, AND I KEPT KILLING PEOPLE FOR 20 YEARS.
I HAVE NO REGRETS.
FWOOOO
WHAT SHOULD I EVEN REGRET IN THE FIRST PLACE?
THAT WAS THAT ONLY PATH AVAILABLE TO ME.
BUB BUB BUB
BUB BUB
BUT Y'KNOW,
IF I COULD HAVE BECOME SOMETHING ELSE...
...I MIGHT'VE PREFERRED TO BE SOMEONE WHO COULD CHAT IT UP WITH PEOPLE I DON'T GET ALONG WITH.

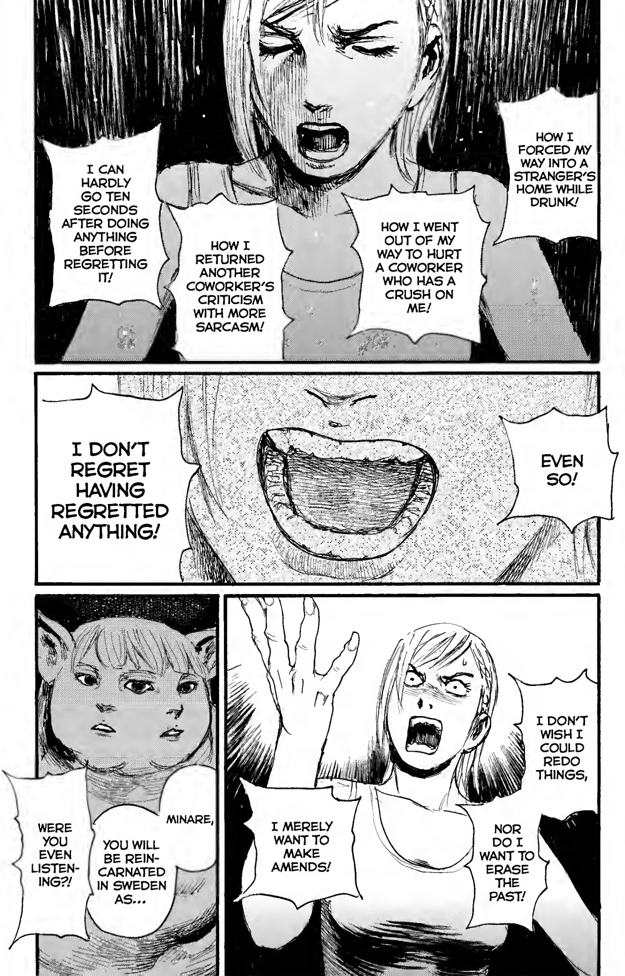

MATTO THE ASSASSIN,
IN ONE YEAR...
...YOU WILL BE REINCARNATED AS THE FIRST-BORN SON OF A MODEST POSTAL WORKER COUPLE IN HALLAND, SWEDEN.
I'M NOT A FAN OF THE COLD.
BUB BUB ボボ
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE WHEN I SHOWED UP FOR WORK TODAY.
OH, WELL. NO COMPLAINTS HERE.
SNAP
SECOND? NO. FOR YOU...
...THIS IS THE 8740TH TIME.
FYOOO
POP
WHAT A WEIRD SOUND...
NOW, THEN. MITSUO, LAY BARE YOUR LIFE'S KARMA.

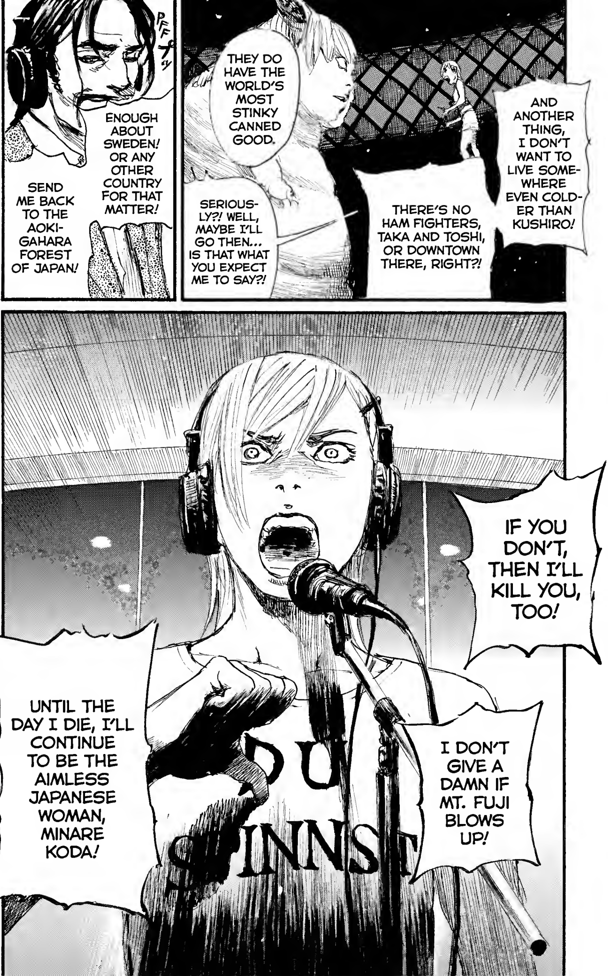

MMM... I DUNNO IF THIS COUNTS AS KARMA OR NOT.
BUT FOR ME, WHAT I FIND STRANGE...
BUB BUB
...IS THAT NO MATTER WHAT I DO OR HOW I ACT...
...I ALWAYS SEEM TO END UP MAKING WOMEN ANGRY.
BUB BUB BUB BUB
I'M JUST TRYING TO LIVE MY LIFE,
BUT TAKE TODAY FOR EXAMPLE.
AFTER BEING MURDERED LIKE THIS...
...FOR THE FIRST TIME, IT MADE ME THINK, "OH, MAN. I MUST'VE MADE HER REALLY ANGRY, HUH?"
I MEAN...
BUB BUB
...YOU KNOW HOW PEOPLE ALWAYS SAY YOU SHOULD LIVE HONESTLY,
OR HOW YOU SHOULDN'T LIE TO YOURSELF.
BUT IF YOU'RE ALWAYS HONEST AND DO WHAT YOU WANT, THERE'LL BE TIMES WHEN YOU END UP HURTING OTHER PEOPLE, RIGHT?
YEAH, I GET IT. WHEN THEY SAY THINGS LIKE THAT...
I don't have anything to do now.
...THEY ALSO MEAN WITHOUT CAUSING TROUBLE FOR OTHER PEOPLE.

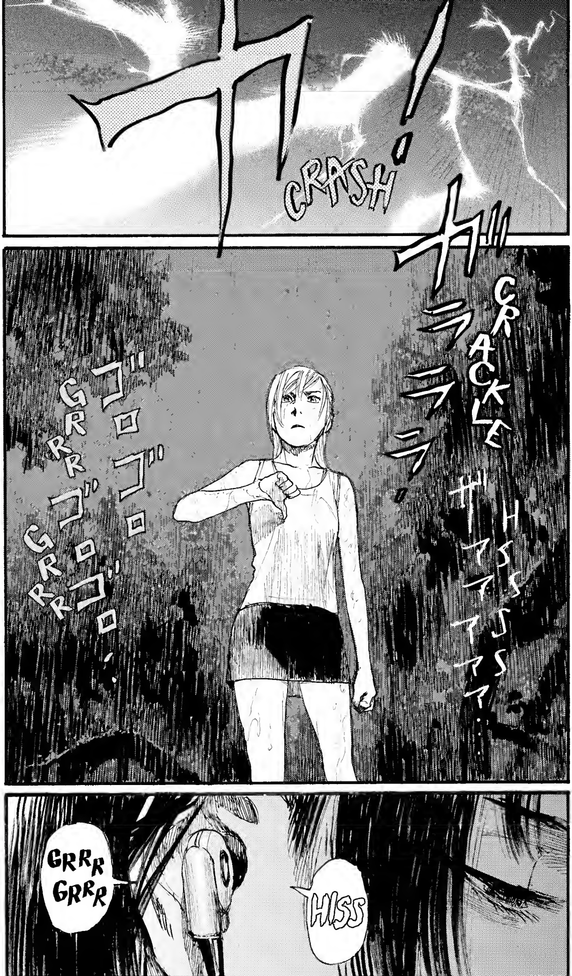

ボボ BUB BUB
BUT Y'KNOW ...
ボボ BUB
...THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW TO ACCOMMODATE OTHER PEOPLE OR TO WHAT DEGREE.
WE'RE TAUGHT THAT WE SHOULDN'T TREAT OTHERS HOW WE WOULDN'T WANT TO BE TREATED,
BUT THE WAY THAT'S INTERPRETED VARIES FROM PERSON TO PERSON.
I THINK THAT I...
...MIGHT JUST BE MORE OUT OF SYNC THAN MOST.
EVEN THOUGH I CAN APOLOGIZE FOR THE TROUBLE I'VE CAUSED, I'M UNABLE TO LEARN FROM IT.
I NEVER KNOW WHAT I'VE DONE WRONG IN THE FIRST PLACE.
SO I THINK I'LL PROBABLY MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AGAIN.
IF I'M TO BE REBORN...I'D REALLY LIKE IT IF THAT DEFECT COULD BE CORRECTED, IF EVEN A LITTLE BIT.
ボボボ BUB BUB
IF NOT, THEN I'D RATHER JUST STAY DEAD.

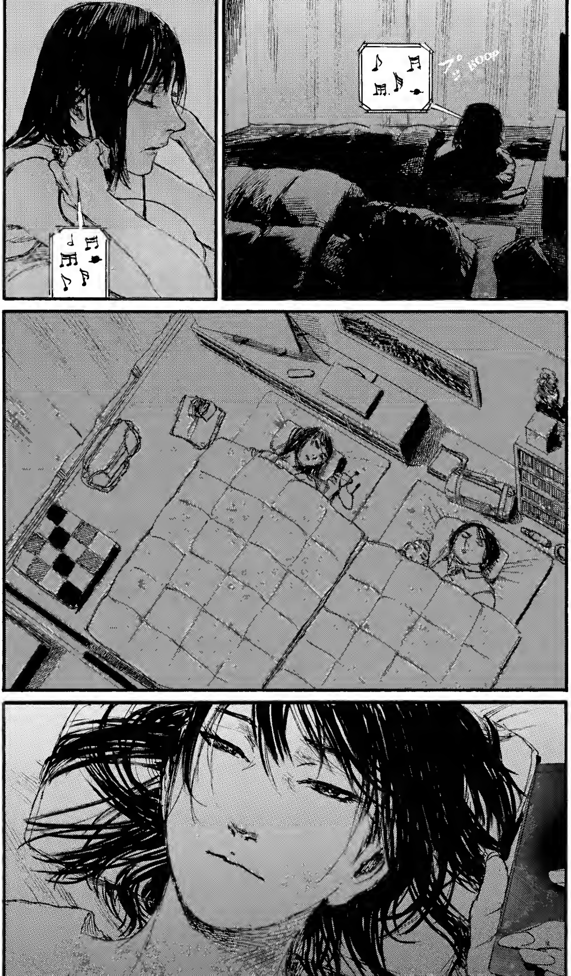

MITSUO.
YOU WILL BE REINCARNATED AS THE SECOND-BORN SON OF A FARMING FAMILY IN BLEKINGE, SWEDEN.
BUB BUB BUB BUB
WHY ARE YOU SO STUCK ON SWEDEN?
BECAUSE THEY HAVE GOOD WELFARE PROGRAMS.
I DON'T WANT A REALIST FOR A GOD...
FYOOOPOP
NOW FOR YOU, WOMAN.
LAY BARE YOUR LIFE'S KARMA.
ARE THERE ANY CRIMES OR REGRETS YOU WISH TO CONFESS? I SHALL ABSOLVE YOU OF EVERYTHING.
WHEN DID I SAY ANYTHING...
...ABOUT WANTING TO BE ABSOLVED?

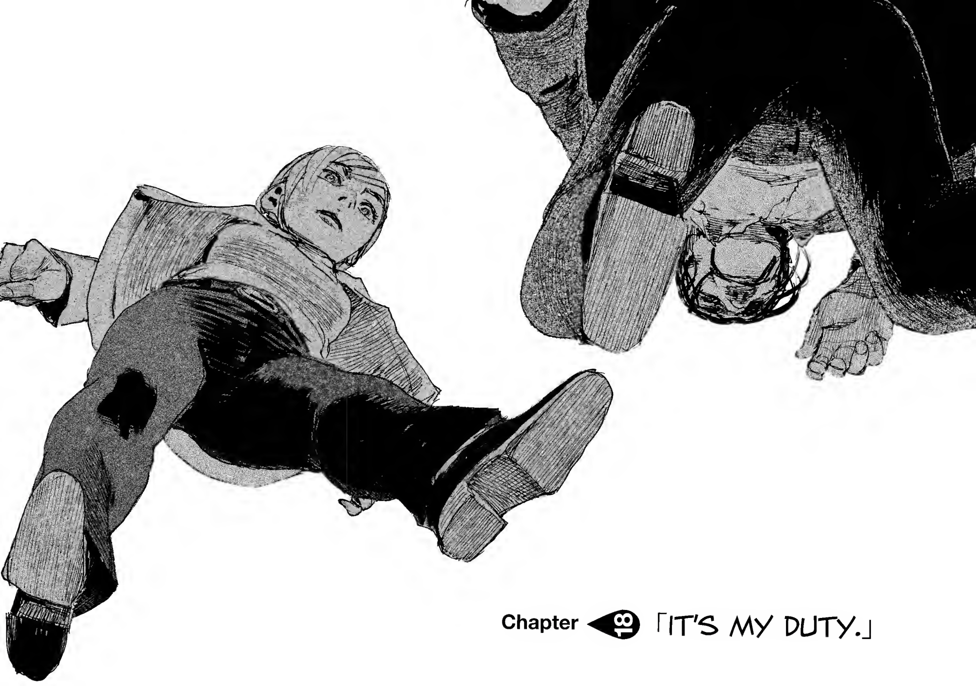

I KILLED A MAN TODAY!
OVER A MEASLY 500,000 YEN!
IS IT REALLY OKAY...
...TO JUST QUIETLY HAVE MY SINS PARDONED...
...AND START OVER IN THE NEXT LIFE AS IF NOTHING HAPPENED?
DOESN'T MURDER MEAN SERVING YOUR SENTENCE ONLY TO BE BRANDED A KILLER FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE AFTER BEING RELEASED?!
*APPROX. $5,000
REGRETS, YOU SAY?
TRY EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY HOUR OF EVERY DAY.
I REGRET AS NATURALLY AS I BREATHE...
HOW I DATED A MAN WHO CAN'T TELL RIGHT FROM WRONG!
HOW I LENT HIM MONEY!
HOW I BITCHED ABOUT ALL OF IT TO A HOT OLDER DUDE I JUST MET AT A BAR!
Now for you, wom
Are there any crim
wish to confess? I s
of everything.
Minare: *Adlib from here on, but make s
yell your name (real) at the
then fade out.
SE – Lightning
SE – Distant
SE –


HOW I FORCED MY WAY INTO A STRANGER'S HOME WHILE DRUNK!
HOW I WENT OUT OF MY WAY TO HURT A COWORKER WHO HAS A CRUSH ON ME!
HOW I RETURNED ANOTHER COWORKER'S CRITICISM WITH MORE SARCASM!
I CAN HARDLY GO TEN SECONDS AFTER DOING ANYTHING BEFORE REGRETTING IT!
EVEN SO!
I DON'T REGRET HAVING REGRETTED ANYTHING!
I DON'T WISH I COULD REDO THINGS,
NOR DO I WANT TO ERASE THE PAST!
I MERELY WANT TO MAKE AMENDS!
MINARE,
YOU WILL BE REINCARNATED IN SWEDEN AS...
WERE YOU EVEN LISTENING?!

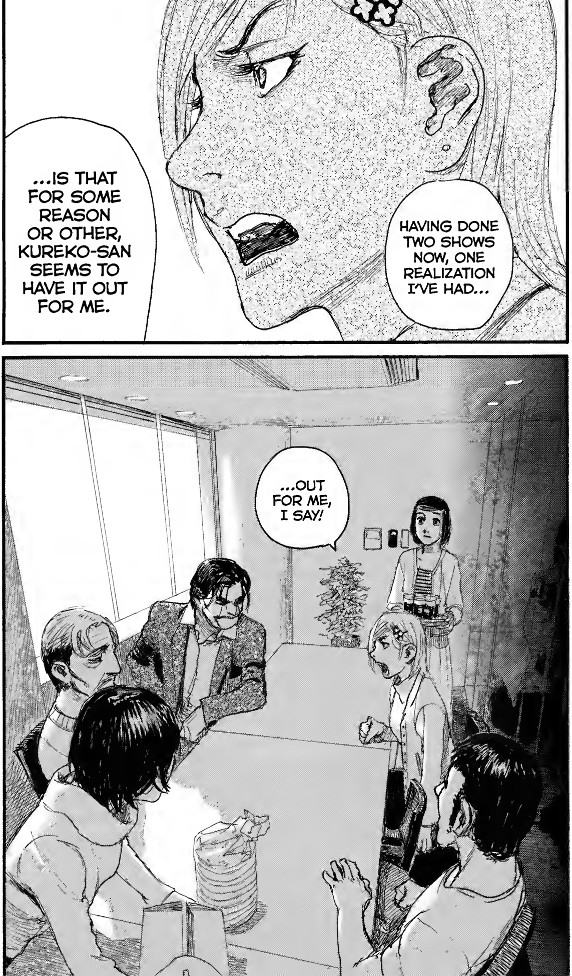

THEY DO HAVE THE WORLD'S MOST STINKY CANNED GOOD.
SERIOUSLY?! WELL, MAYBE I'LL GO THEN... IS THAT WHAT YOU EXPECT ME TO SAY?!
THERE'S NO HAM FIGHTERS, TAKA AND TOSHI, OR DOWNTOWN THERE, RIGHT?!
AND ANOTHER THING, I DON'T WANT TO LIVE SOMEWHERE EVEN COLDER THAN KUSHIRO!
PFF
ENOUGH ABOUT SWEDEN! OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY FOR THAT MATTER!
SEND ME BACK TO THE AOKIGAHARA FOREST OF JAPAN!
IF YOU DON'T, THEN I'LL KILL YOU, TOO!
I DON'T GIVE A DAMN IF MT. FUJI BLOWS UP!
UNTIL THE DAY I DIE, I'LL CONTINUE TO BE THE AIMLESS JAPANESE WOMAN, MINARE KODA!

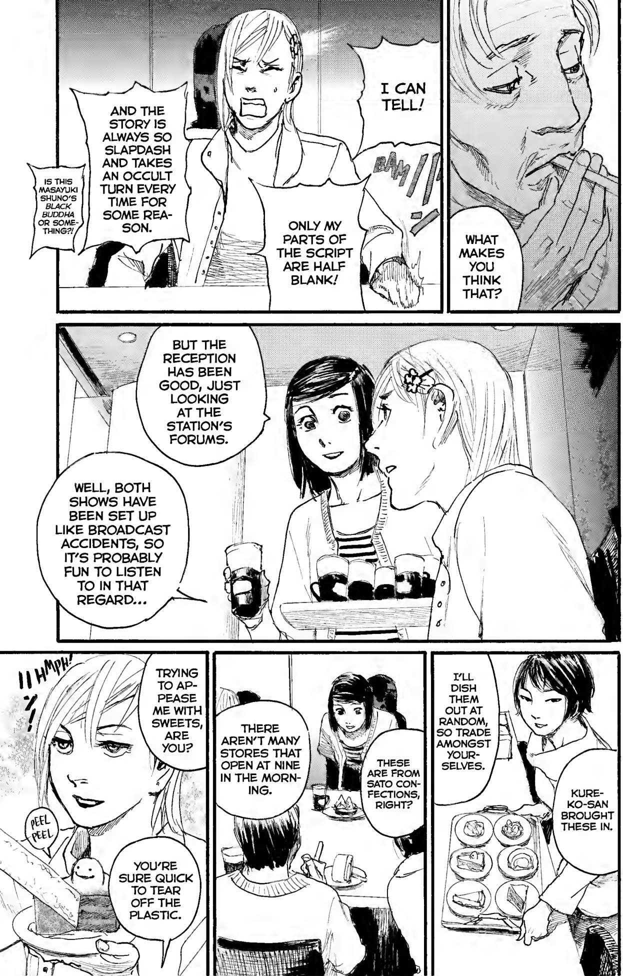

カッ!
CRASH
ガラララ…
CRACKLE
ザアアアア…
HISS
ゴロゴロゴロゴロ…
GRRR GRRR
HISS
GRRR GRRR

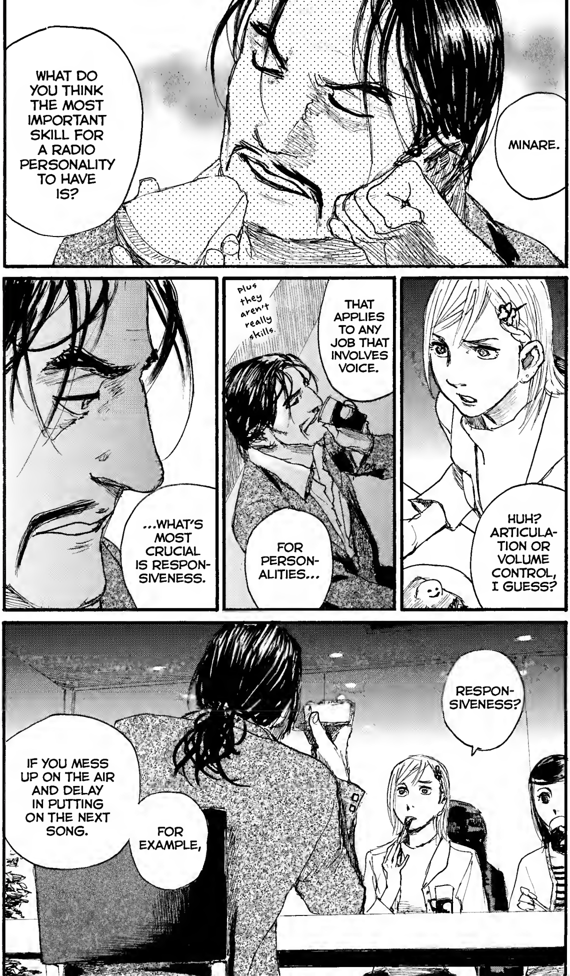

プッ BOOP

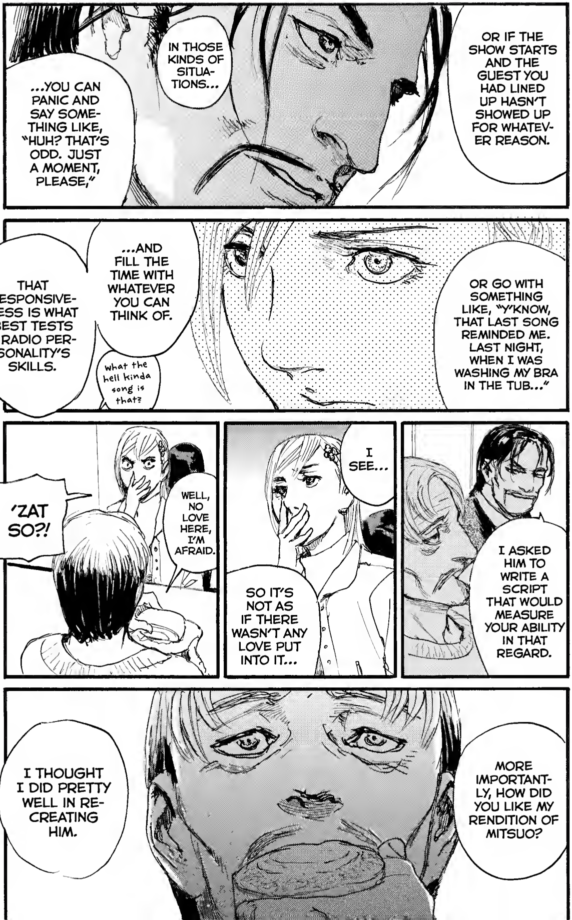


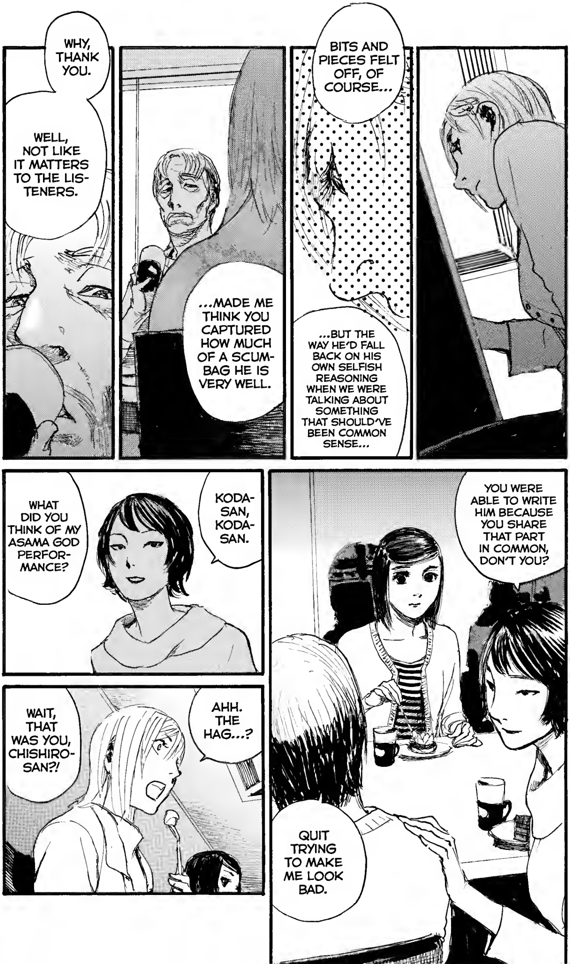
Chapter 18 「IT'S MY DUTY.」

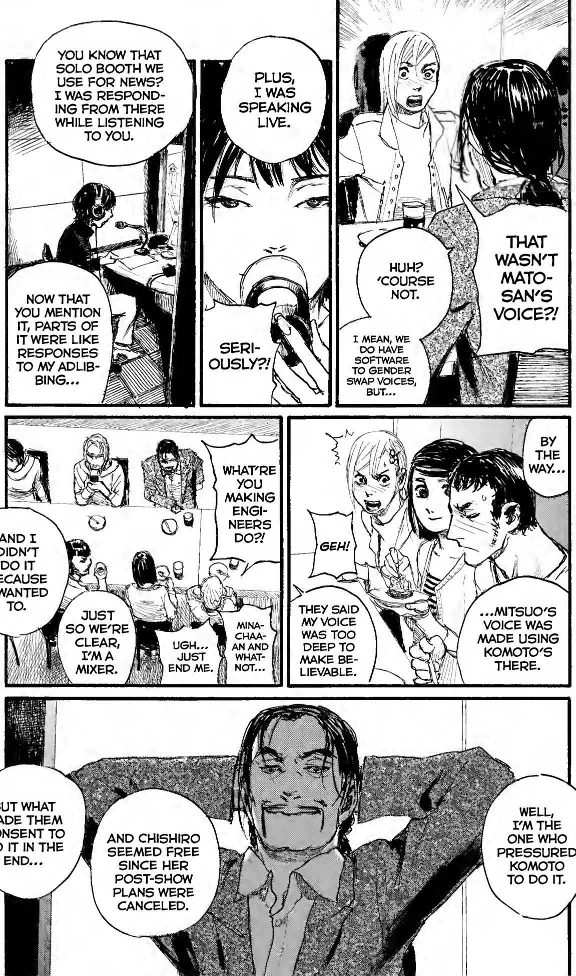

HAVING DONE TWO SHOWS NOW, ONE REALIZATION I'VE HAD...
...IS THAT FOR SOME REASON OR OTHER, KUREKO-SAN SEEMS TO HAVE IT OUT FOR ME.
...OUT FOR ME, I SAY!

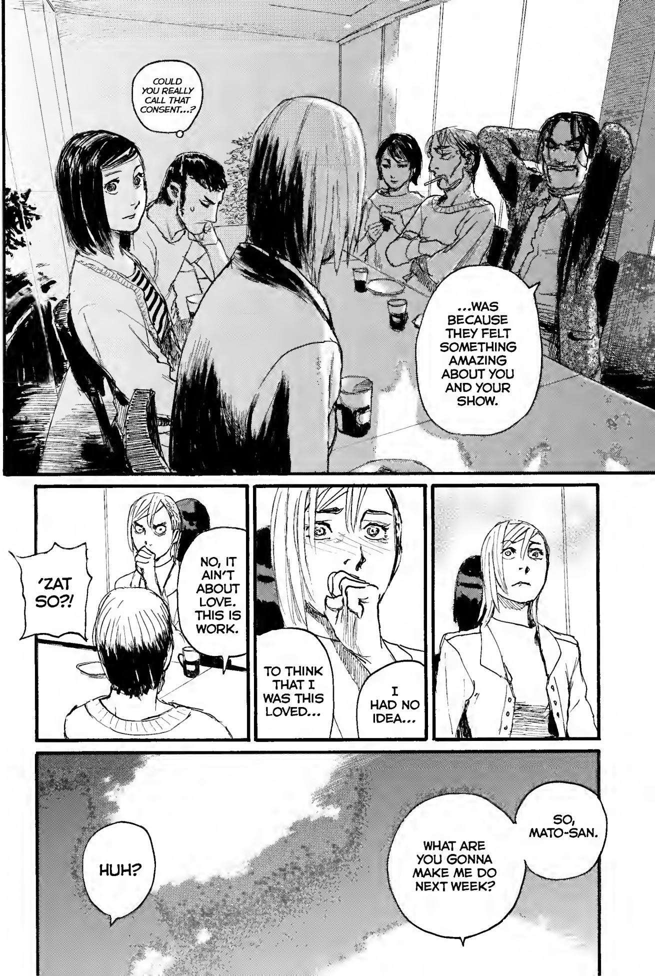

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT?
I CAN TELL!
BAM
ONLY MY PARTS OF THE SCRIPT ARE HALF BLANK!
AND THE STORY IS ALWAYS SO SLAPDASH AND TAKES AN OCCULT TURN EVERY TIME FOR SOME REASON.
IS THIS MASAYUKI SHUNO'S *BLACK BUDDHA* OR SOMETHING?!
BUT THE RECEPTION HAS BEEN GOOD, JUST LOOKING AT THE STATION'S FORUMS.
WELL, BOTH SHOWS HAVE BEEN SET UP LIKE BROADCAST ACCIDENTS, SO IT'S PROBABLY FUN TO LISTEN TO IN THAT REGARD...
KUREKO-SAN BROUGHT THESE IN.
I'LL DISH THEM OUT AT RANDOM, SO TRADE AMONGST YOURSELVES.
THESE ARE FROM SATO CONFECTIONS, RIGHT?
THERE AREN'T MANY STORES THAT OPEN AT NINE IN THE MORNING.
HMPH!
TRYING TO APPEASE ME WITH SWEETS, ARE YOU?
PEEL PEEL
YOU'RE SURE QUICK TO TEAR OFF THE PLASTIC.

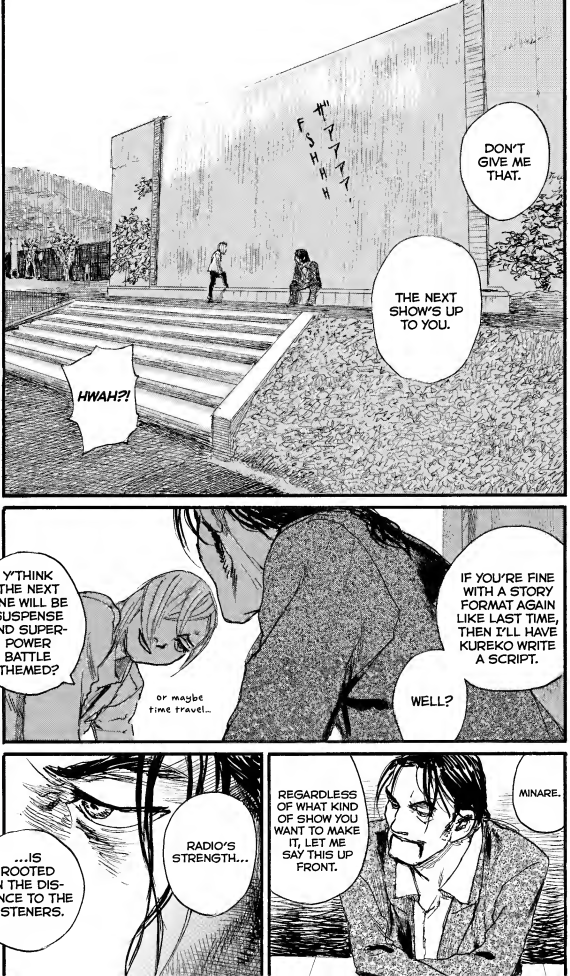

MINARE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL FOR A RADIO PERSONALITY TO HAVE IS?
HUH? ARTICULATION OR VOLUME CONTROL, I GUESS?
THAT APPLIES TO ANY JOB THAT INVOLVES VOICE.
plus they aren't really skills.
FOR PERSONALITIES...
...WHAT'S MOST CRUCIAL IS RESPONSIVENESS.
RESPONSIVENESS?
FOR EXAMPLE,
IF YOU MESS UP ON THE AIR AND DELAY IN PUTTING ON THE NEXT SONG.

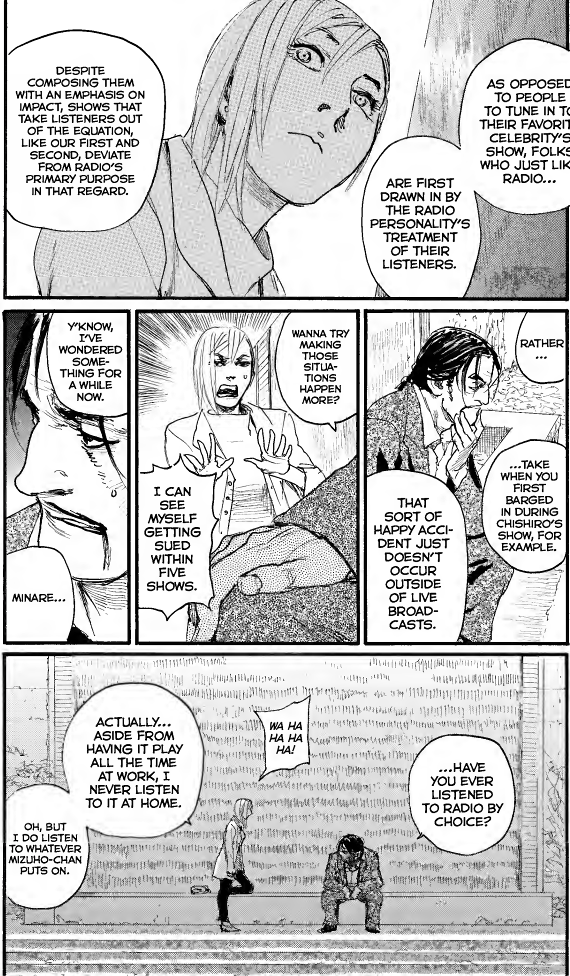

OR IF THE SHOW STARTS AND THE GUEST YOU HAD LINED UP HASN'T SHOWED UP FOR WHATEVER REASON.
IN THOSE KINDS OF SITUATIONS...
...YOU CAN PANIC AND SAY SOMETHING LIKE, "HUH? THAT'S ODD. JUST A MOMENT, PLEASE,"
OR GO WITH SOMETHING LIKE, "Y'KNOW, THAT LAST SONG REMINDED ME. LAST NIGHT, WHEN I WAS WASHING MY BRA IN THE TUB..."
...AND FILL THE TIME WITH WHATEVER YOU CAN THINK OF.
what the hell kinda song is that?
THAT RESPONSIVENESS IS WHAT BEST TESTS A RADIO PERSONALITY'S SKILLS.
I ASKED HIM TO WRITE A SCRIPT THAT WOULD MEASURE YOUR ABILITY IN THAT REGARD.
I SEE...
SO IT'S NOT AS IF THERE WASN'T ANY LOVE PUT INTO IT...
WELL, NO LOVE HERE, I'M AFRAID.
'ZAT SO?!
MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW DID YOU LIKE MY RENDITION OF MITSUO?
I THOUGHT I DID PRETTY WELL IN RECREATING HIM.

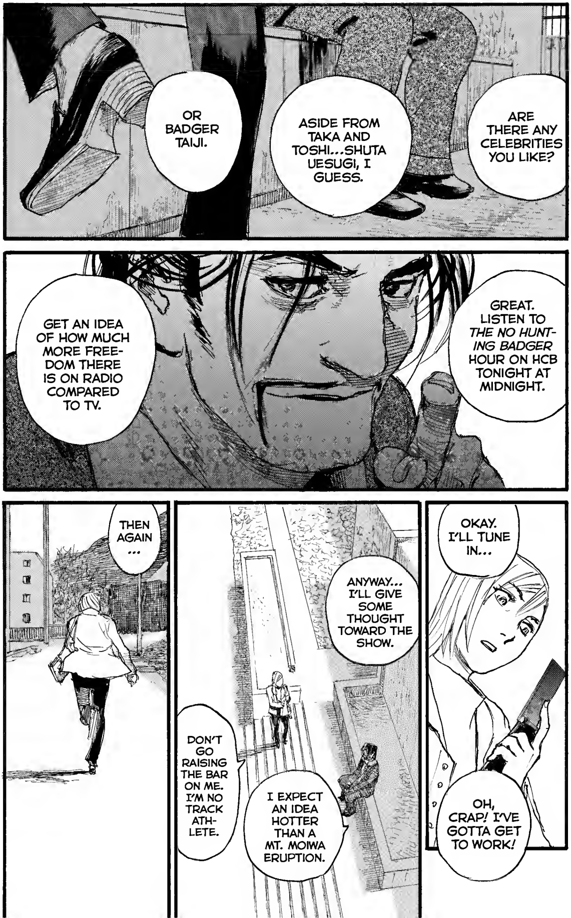

BITS AND PIECES FELT OFF, OF COURSE...
...BUT THE WAY HE'D FALL BACK ON HIS OWN SELFISH REASONING WHEN WE WERE TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING THAT SHOULD'VE BEEN COMMON SENSE...
...MADE ME THINK YOU CAPTURED HOW MUCH OF A SCUMBAG HE IS VERY WELL.
WHY, THANK YOU.
WELL, NOT LIKE IT MATTERS TO THE LISTENERS.
YOU WERE ABLE TO WRITE HIM BECAUSE YOU SHARE THAT PART IN COMMON, DON'T YOU?
QUIT TRYING TO MAKE ME LOOK BAD.
KODA-SAN, KODA-SAN.
WHAT DID YOU THINK OF MY ASAMA GOD PERFORMANCE?
AHH. THE HAG...?
WAIT, THAT WAS YOU, CHISHIRO-SAN?!

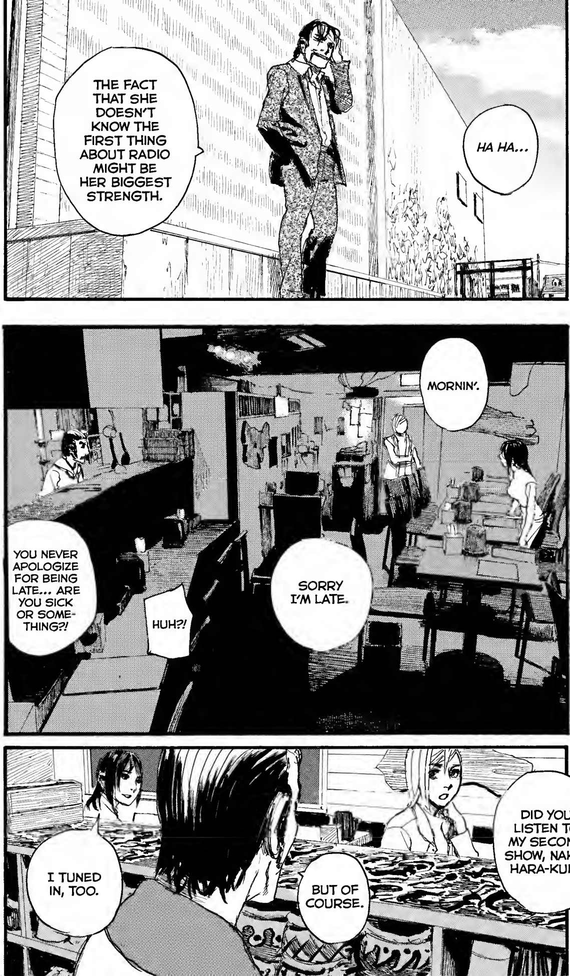

THAT WASN'T MATO-SAN'S VOICE?!
HUH? 'COURSE NOT.
I MEAN, WE DO HAVE SOFTWARE TO GENDER SWAP VOICES, BUT...
PLUS, I WAS SPEAKING LIVE.
SERIOUSLY?!
YOU KNOW THAT SOLO BOOTH WE USE FOR NEWS? I WAS RESPONDING FROM THERE WHILE LISTENING TO YOU.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, PARTS OF IT WERE LIKE RESPONSES TO MY ADLIBBING...
BY THE WAY...
...MITSUO'S VOICE WAS MADE USING KOMOTO'S THERE.
GEH!
THEY SAID MY VOICE WAS TOO DEEP TO MAKE BELIEVABLE.
WHAT'RE YOU MAKING ENGINEERS DO?!
MINA-CHAAAN AND WHATNOT...
UGH... JUST END ME.
JUST SO WE'RE CLEAR, I'M A MIXER.
AND I DIDN'T DO IT BECAUSE I WANTED TO.
WELL, I'M THE ONE WHO PRESSURED KOMOTO TO DO IT.
AND CHISHIRO SEEMED FREE SINCE HER POST-SHOW PLANS WERE CANCELED.
BUT WHAT MADE THEM CONSENT TO DO IT IN THE END...

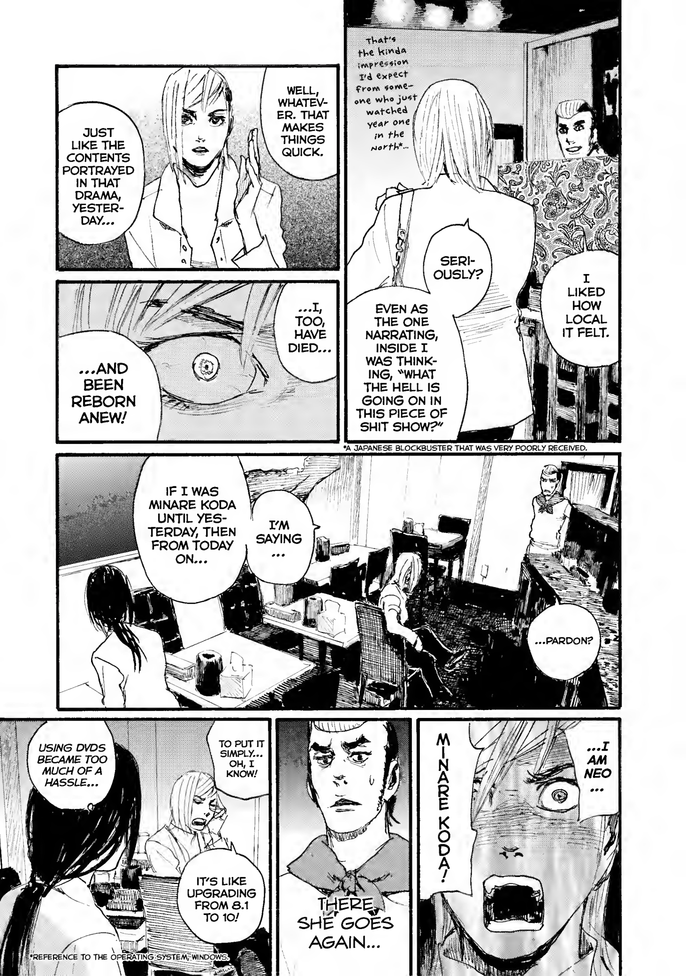

...WAS BECAUSE THEY FELT SOMETHING AMAZING ABOUT YOU AND YOUR SHOW.
COULD YOU REALLY CALL THAT CONSENT...?
I HAD NO IDEA...
TO THINK THAT I WAS THIS LOVED...
NO, IT AIN'T ABOUT LOVE. THIS IS WORK.
'ZAT SO?!
SO, MATO-SAN.
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA MAKE ME DO NEXT WEEK?
HUH?


DON'T GIVE ME THAT.
ザアアアア
FSHHH
THE NEXT SHOW'S UP TO YOU.
HWAH?!
IF YOU'RE FINE WITH A STORY FORMAT AGAIN LIKE LAST TIME, THEN I'LL HAVE KUREKO WRITE A SCRIPT.
WELL?
or maybe time travel...
Y'THINK THE NEXT ONE WILL BE SUSPENSE AND SUPER-POWER BATTLE THEMED?
MINARE.
REGARDLESS OF WHAT KIND OF SHOW YOU WANT TO MAKE IT, LET ME SAY THIS UP FRONT.
RADIO'S STRENGTH...
...IS ROOTED IN THE DISTANCE TO THE LISTENERS.


AS OPPOSED TO PEOPLE TO TUNE IN TO THEIR FAVORITE CELEBRITY'S SHOW, FOLKS WHO JUST LIKE RADIO...
ARE FIRST DRAWN IN BY THE RADIO PERSONALITY'S TREATMENT OF THEIR LISTENERS.
DESPITE COMPOSING THEM WITH AN EMPHASIS ON IMPACT, SHOWS THAT TAKE LISTENERS OUT OF THE EQUATION, LIKE OUR FIRST AND SECOND, DEVIATE FROM RADIO'S PRIMARY PURPOSE IN THAT REGARD.
RATHER...
...TAKE WHEN YOU FIRST BARGED IN DURING CHISHIRO'S SHOW, FOR EXAMPLE.
THAT SORT OF HAPPY ACCIDENT JUST DOESN'T OCCUR OUTSIDE OF LIVE BROADCASTS.
WANNA TRY MAKING THOSE SITUATIONS HAPPEN MORE?
I CAN SEE MYSELF GETTING SUED WITHIN FIVE SHOWS.
Y'KNOW, I'VE WONDERED SOMETHING FOR A WHILE NOW.
MINARE...
...HAVE YOU EVER LISTENED TO RADIO BY CHOICE?
WA HA HA HA HA!
ACTUALLY... ASIDE FROM HAVING IT PLAY ALL THE TIME AT WORK, I NEVER LISTEN TO IT AT HOME.
OH, BUT I DO LISTEN TO WHATEVER MIZUHO-CHAN PUTS ON.

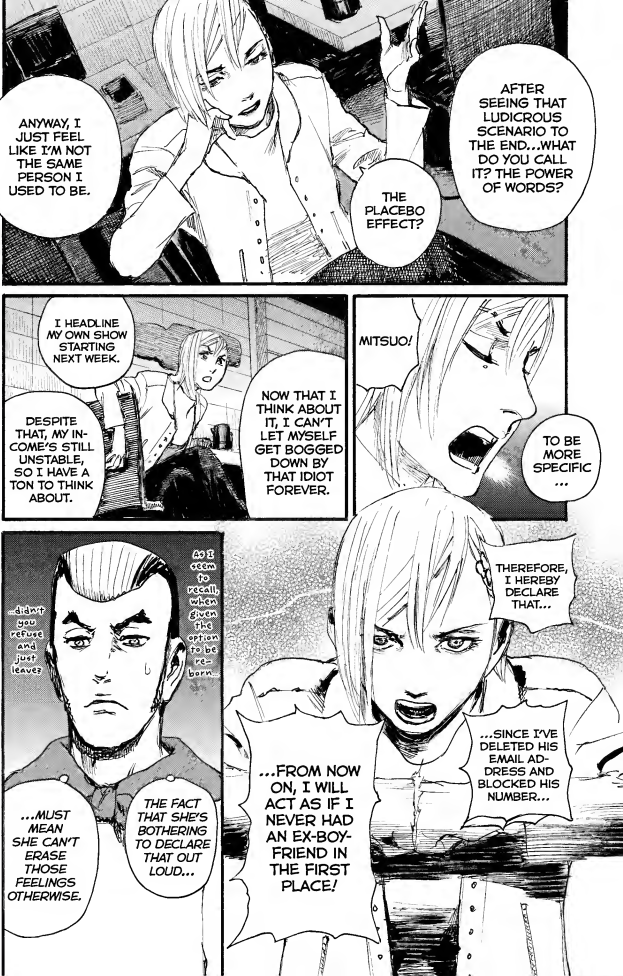

ARE THERE ANY CELEBRITIES YOU LIKE?
ASIDE FROM TAKA AND TOSHI...SHUTA UESUGI, I GUESS.
OR BADGER TAIJI.
GREAT. LISTEN TO *THE NO HUNTING BADGER* HOUR ON HCB TONIGHT AT MIDNIGHT.
GET AN IDEA OF HOW MUCH MORE FREEDOM THERE IS ON RADIO COMPARED TO TV.
OKAY. I'LL TUNE IN...
OH, CRAP! I'VE GOTTA GET TO WORK!
ANYWAY... I'LL GIVE SOME THOUGHT TOWARD THE SHOW.
I EXPECT AN IDEA HOTTER THAN A MT. MOIWA ERUPTION.
DON'T GO RAISING THE BAR ON ME. I'M NO TRACK ATHLETE.
THEN AGAIN...

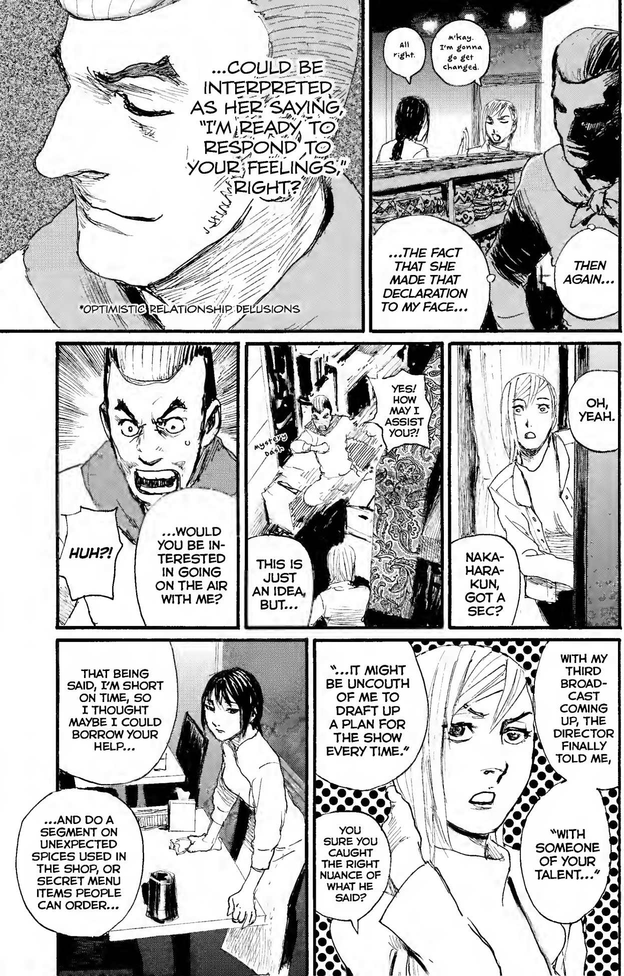

HA HA...
THE FACT THAT SHE DOESN'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT RADIO MIGHT BE HER BIGGEST STRENGTH.
MORNIN'.
SORRY I'M LATE.
HUH?!
YOU NEVER APOLOGIZE FOR BEING LATE... ARE YOU SICK OR SOMETHING?!
DID YOU LISTEN TO MY SECOND SHOW, NAKAHARA-KUN?
BUT OF COURSE.
I TUNED IN, TOO.

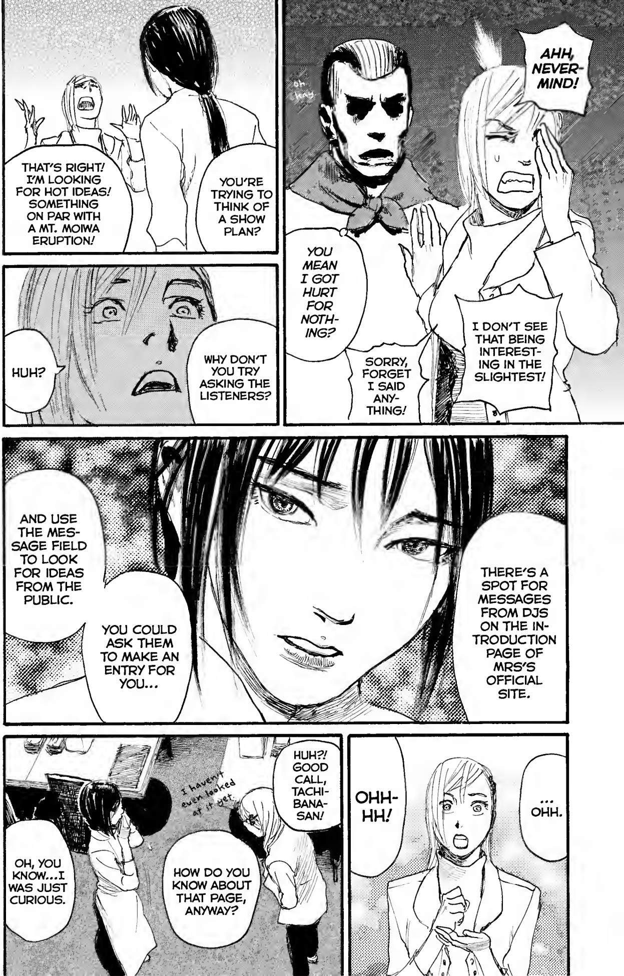

That's the kinda impression I'd expect from someone who just watched year one in the North*...
I LIKED HOW LOCAL IT FELT.
SERIOUSLY?
EVEN AS THE ONE NARRATING, INSIDE I WAS THINKING, "WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON IN THIS PIECE OF SHIT SHOW?"
WELL, WHATEVER. THAT MAKES THINGS QUICK.
JUST LIKE THE CONTENTS PORTRAYED IN THAT DRAMA, YESTERDAY...
...I, TOO, HAVE DIED...
...AND BEEN REBORN ANEW!
I'M SAYING...
IF I WAS MINARE KODA UNTIL YESTERDAY, THEN FROM TODAY ON...
...PARDON?
...I AM NEO
MINARE KODA!
THERE SHE GOES AGAIN...
TO PUT IT SIMPLY... OH, I KNOW!
IT'S LIKE UPGRADING FROM 8.1 TO 10!
USING DVDS BECAME TOO MUCH OF A HASSLE...

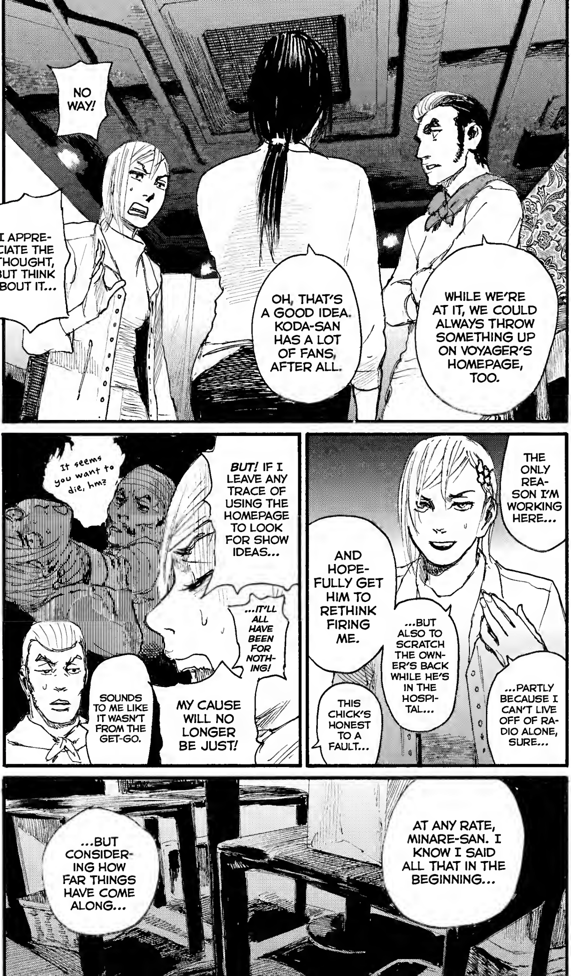
*A JAPANESE BLOCKBUSTER THAT WAS VERY POORLY RECEIVED.

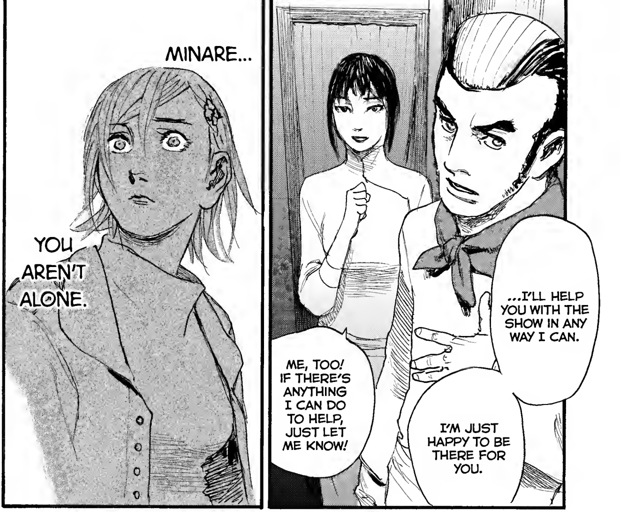
*REFERENCE TO THE OPERATING SYSTEM, WINDOWS.


AFTER SEEING THAT LUDICROUS SCENARIO TO THE END...WHAT DO YOU CALL IT? THE POWER OF WORDS?
THE PLACEBO EFFECT?
ANYWAY, I JUST FEEL LIKE I'M NOT THE SAME PERSON I USED TO BE.
MITSUO!
TO BE MORE SPECIFIC...
I HEADLINE MY OWN SHOW STARTING NEXT WEEK.
DESPITE THAT, MY INCOME'S STILL UNSTABLE, SO I HAVE A TON TO THINK ABOUT.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I CAN'T LET MYSELF GET BOGGED DOWN BY THAT IDIOT FOREVER.
THEREFORE, I HEREBY DECLARE THAT...
...SINCE I'VE DELETED HIS EMAIL ADDRESS AND BLOCKED HIS NUMBER...
...FROM NOW ON, I WILL ACT AS IF I NEVER HAD AN EX-BOYFRIEND IN THE FIRST PLACE!
As I seem to recall, when given the option to be reborn...
...didn't you refuse and just leave?
THE FACT THAT SHE'S BOTHERING TO DECLARE THAT OUT LOUD...
...MUST MEAN SHE CAN'T ERASE THOSE FEELINGS OTHERWISE.


All right.
m'kay. I'm gonna go get changed.
THEN AGAIN...
...THE FACT THAT SHE MADE THAT DECLARATION TO MY FACE...
...COULD BE INTERPRETED AS HER SAYING, "I'M READY TO RESPOND TO YOUR FEELINGS," RIGHT?
*OPTIMISTIC RELATIONSHIP DELUSIONS
OH, YEAH.
NAKAHARA-KUN, GOT A SEC?
YES! HOW MAY I ASSIST YOU?!
mystery dash
THIS IS JUST AN IDEA, BUT...
...WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN GOING ON THE AIR WITH ME?
HUH?!
WITH MY THIRD BROADCAST COMING UP, THE DIRECTOR FINALLY TOLD ME,
"WITH SOMEONE OF YOUR TALENT..."
"...IT MIGHT BE UNCOUTH OF ME TO DRAFT UP A PLAN FOR THE SHOW EVERY TIME."
YOU SURE YOU CAUGHT THE RIGHT NUANCE OF WHAT HE SAID?
THAT BEING SAID, I'M SHORT ON TIME, SO I THOUGHT MAYBE I COULD BORROW YOUR HELP...
...AND DO A SEGMENT ON UNEXPECTED SPICES USED IN THE SHOP, OR SECRET MENU ITEMS PEOPLE CAN ORDER...


AHH, NEVERMIND!
oh... kay
I DON'T SEE THAT BEING INTERESTING IN THE SLIGHTEST!
SORRY, FORGET I SAID ANYTHING!
YOU MEAN I GOT HURT FOR NOTHING?
YOU'RE TRYING TO THINK OF A SHOW PLAN?
THAT'S RIGHT! I'M LOOKING FOR HOT IDEAS! SOMETHING ON PAR WITH A MT. MOIWA ERUPTION!
WHY DON'T YOU TRY ASKING THE LISTENERS?
HUH?
THERE'S A SPOT FOR MESSAGES FROM DJS ON THE INTRODUCTION PAGE OF MRS'S OFFICIAL SITE.
YOU COULD ASK THEM TO MAKE AN ENTRY FOR YOU...
AND USE THE MESSAGE FIELD TO LOOK FOR IDEAS FROM THE PUBLIC.
...OHH.
OHHHH!
HUH?! GOOD CALL, TACHIBANA-SAN!
I haven't even looked at it yet.
HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT PAGE, ANYWAY?
OH, YOU KNOW...I WAS JUST CURIOUS.

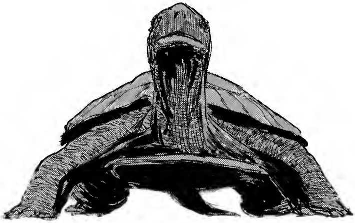

WHILE WE'RE AT IT, WE COULD ALWAYS THROW SOMETHING UP ON VOYAGER'S HOMEPAGE, TOO.
OH, THAT'S A GOOD IDEA. KODA-SAN HAS A LOT OF FANS, AFTER ALL.
NO WAY!
I APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT, BUT THINK ABOUT IT...
THE ONLY REASON I'M WORKING HERE...
...PARTLY BECAUSE I CAN'T LIVE OFF OF RADIO ALONE, SURE...
...BUT ALSO TO SCRATCH THE OWNER'S BACK WHILE HE'S IN THE HOSPITAL...
AND HOPEFULLY GET HIM TO RETHINK FIRING ME.
THIS CHICK'S HONEST TO A FAULT...
BUT! IF I LEAVE ANY TRACE OF USING THE HOMEPAGE TO LOOK FOR SHOW IDEAS...
...IT'LL ALL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING!
MY CAUSE WILL NO LONGER BE JUST!
It seems you want to die, hm?
SOUNDS TO ME LIKE IT WASN'T FROM THE GET-GO.
AT ANY RATE, MINARE-SAN. I KNOW I SAID ALL THAT IN THE BEGINNING...
...BUT CONSIDERING HOW FAR THINGS HAVE COME ALONG...

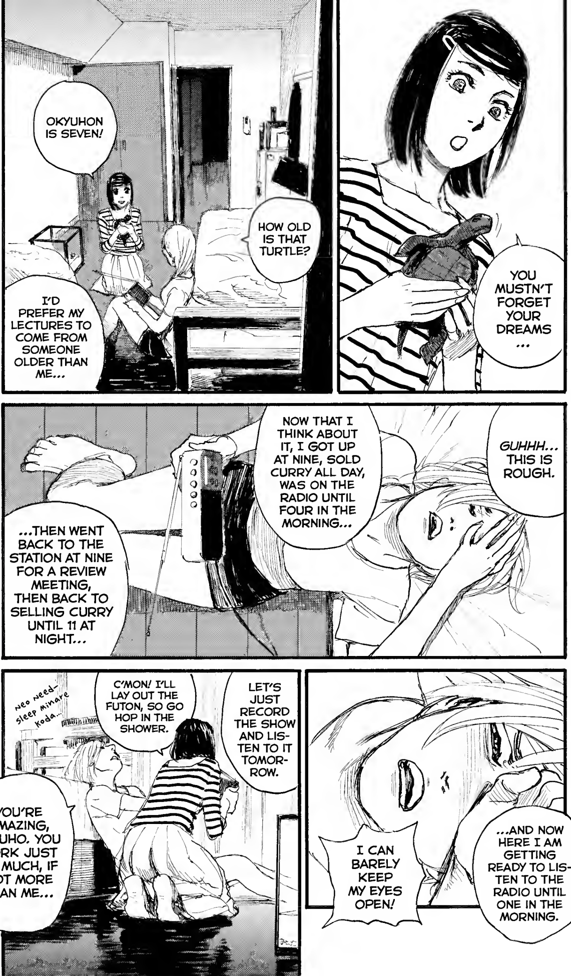

...I'LL HELP YOU WITH THE SHOW IN ANY WAY I CAN.
I'M JUST HAPPY TO BE THERE FOR YOU.
ME, TOO! IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP, JUST LET ME KNOW!
MINARE...
YOU AREN'T ALONE.

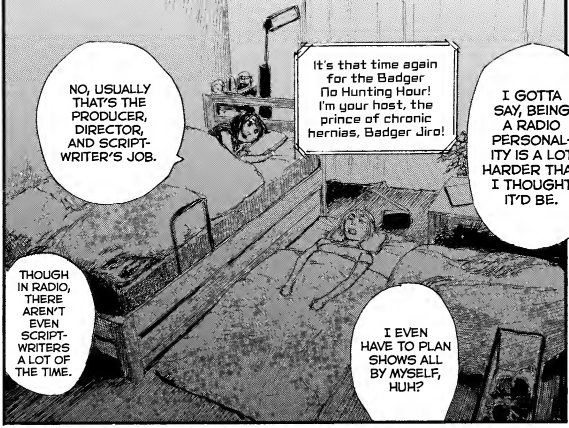
RADIO HOSTS ARE DIFFERENT FROM COMEDIANS. THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH ON YOUR EFFORTS ALONE.

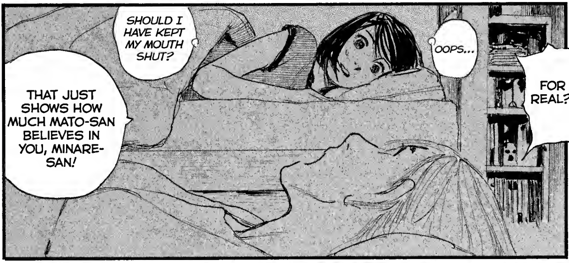
THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUR FRIENDS, THE WORKS OF ARTISTS, THE WORDS OF THE LISTENERS...

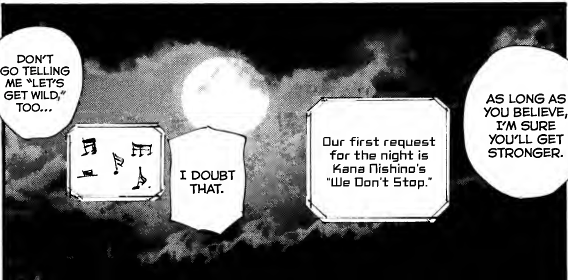
ALL YOU NEED TO BE IS A COORDINATOR WHO CAN SKILLFULLY ARRANGE SUCH PIECES INTO A MOSAIC MEANT TO PLEASE YOUR AUDIENCE.

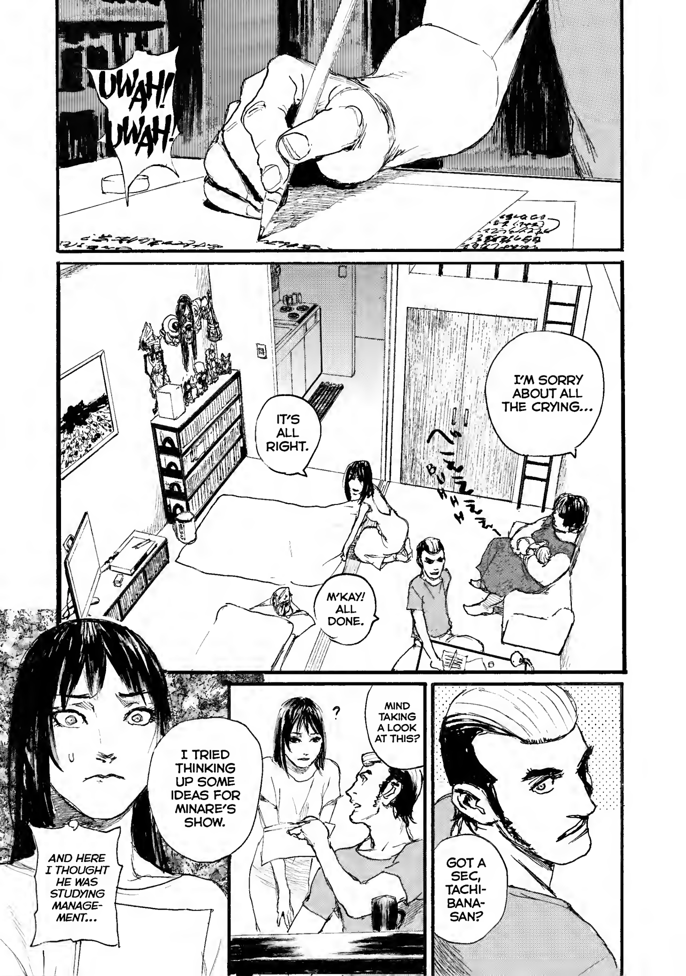


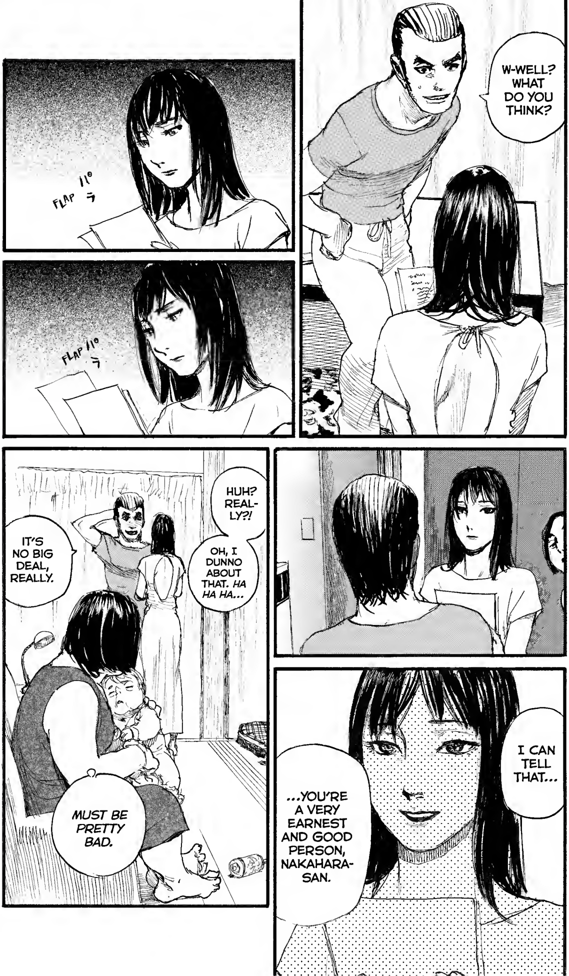

YOU MUSTN'T FORGET YOUR DREAMS...
HOW OLD IS THAT TURTLE?
OKYUHON IS SEVEN!
I'D PREFER MY LECTURES TO COME FROM SOMEONE OLDER THAN ME...
GUHHH... THIS IS ROUGH.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I GOT UP AT NINE, SOLD CURRY ALL DAY, WAS ON THE RADIO UNTIL FOUR IN THE MORNING...
...THEN WENT BACK TO THE STATION AT NINE FOR A REVIEW MEETING, THEN BACK TO SELLING CURRY UNTIL 11 AT NIGHT...
...AND NOW HERE I AM GETTING READY TO LISTEN TO THE RADIO UNTIL ONE IN THE MORNING.
I CAN BARELY KEEP MY EYES OPEN!
LET'S JUST RECORD THE SHOW AND LISTEN TO IT TOMORROW.
C'MON! I'LL LAY OUT THE FUTON, SO GO HOP IN THE SHOWER.
Neo Need-Sleep Minare Koda...
YOU'RE AMAZING, MIZUHO. YOU WORK JUST AS MUCH, IF NOT MORE THAN ME...


It's that time again for the Badger No Hunting Hour! I'm your host, the prince of chronic hernias, Badger Jiro!
I GOTTA SAY, BEING A RADIO PERSONALITY IS A LOT HARDER THAN I THOUGHT IT'D BE.
I EVEN HAVE TO PLAN SHOWS ALL BY MYSELF, HUH?
NO, USUALLY THAT'S THE PRODUCER, DIRECTOR, AND SCRIPTWRITER'S JOB.
THOUGH IN RADIO, THERE AREN'T EVEN SCRIPTWRITERS A LOT OF THE TIME.

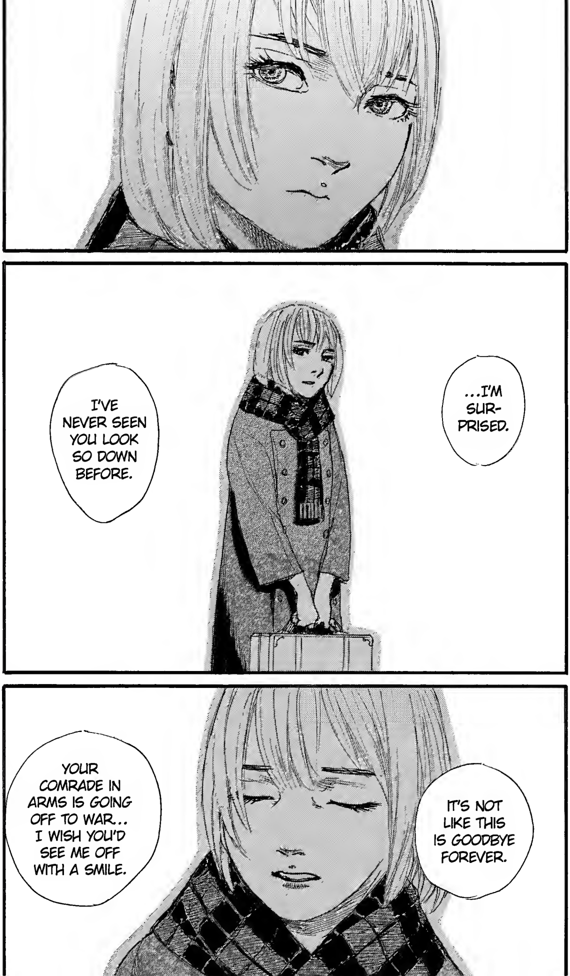

FOR REAL?!
OOPS...
SHOULD I HAVE KEPT MY MOUTH SHUT?
THAT JUST SHOWS HOW MUCH MATO-SAN BELIEVES IN YOU, MINARE-SAN!

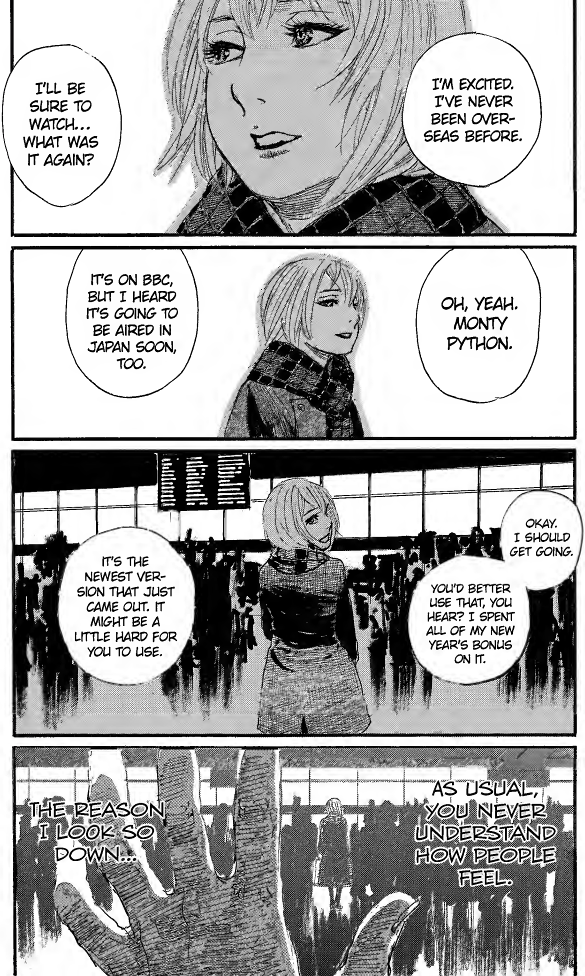

AS LONG AS YOU BELIEVE, I'M SURE YOU'LL GET STRONGER.
Our first request for the night is Kana Nishino's "We Don't Stop."
I DOUBT THAT.
DON'T GO TELLING ME "LET'S GET WILD," TOO...

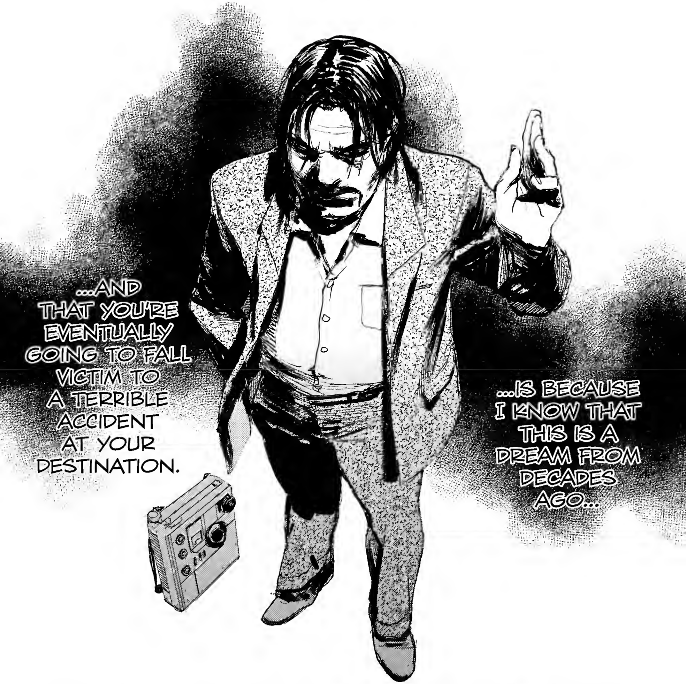

UWAH! UWAH!
I'M SORRY ABOUT ALL THE CRYING...
BUHHH
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
M'KAY! ALL DONE.
GOT A SEC, TACHIBANA-SAN?
MIND TAKING A LOOK AT THIS?
?
I TRIED THINKING UP SOME IDEAS FOR MINARE'S SHOW.
AND HERE I THOUGHT HE WAS STUDYING MANAGEMENT...

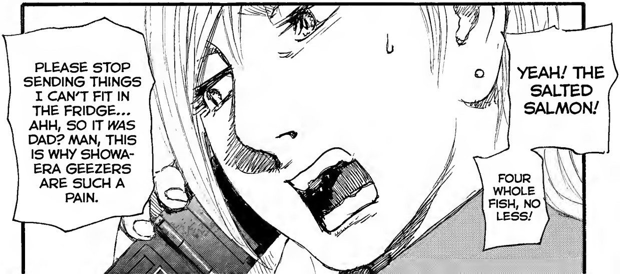

W-WELL? WHAT DO YOU THINK?
FLAP パラ
FLAP パラ
I CAN TELL THAT...
...YOU'RE A VERY EARNEST AND GOOD PERSON, NAKAHARA-SAN.
HUH? REAL-LY?!
OH, I DUNNO ABOUT THAT. *HA HA HA...*
IT'S NO BIG DEAL, REALLY.
MUST BE PRETTY BAD.

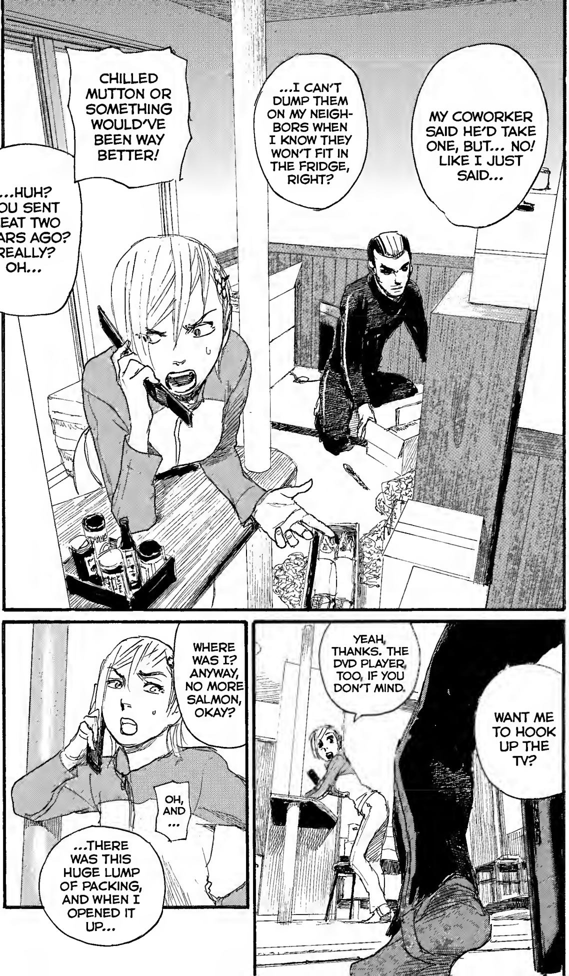
Chapter 19 「I WANT TO WARM YOU.」

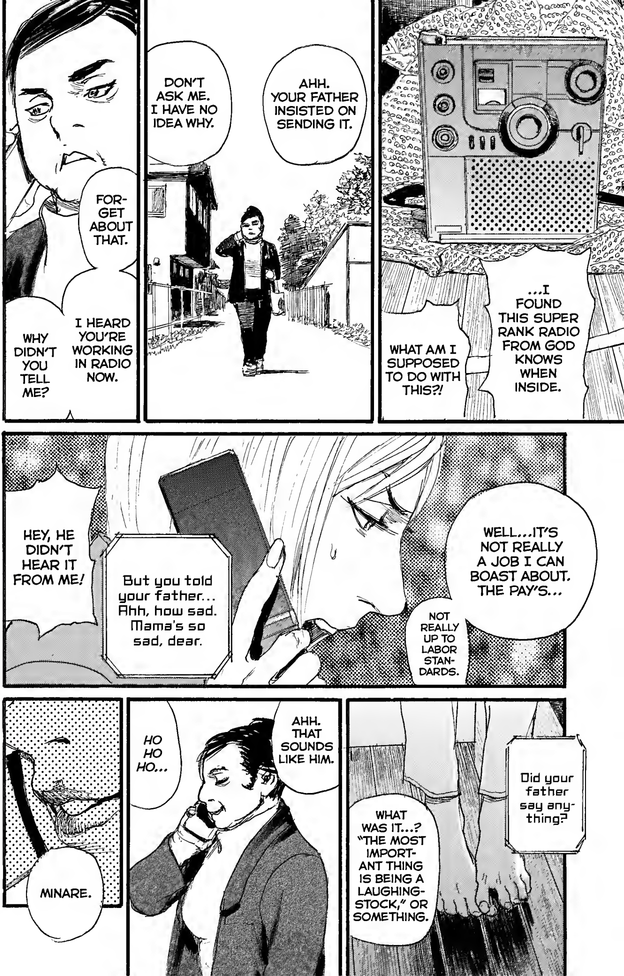

...I'M SURPRISED.
I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU LOOK SO DOWN BEFORE.
IT'S NOT LIKE THIS IS GOODBYE FOREVER.
YOUR COMRADE IN ARMS IS GOING OFF TO WAR... I WISH YOU'D SEE ME OFF WITH A SMILE.

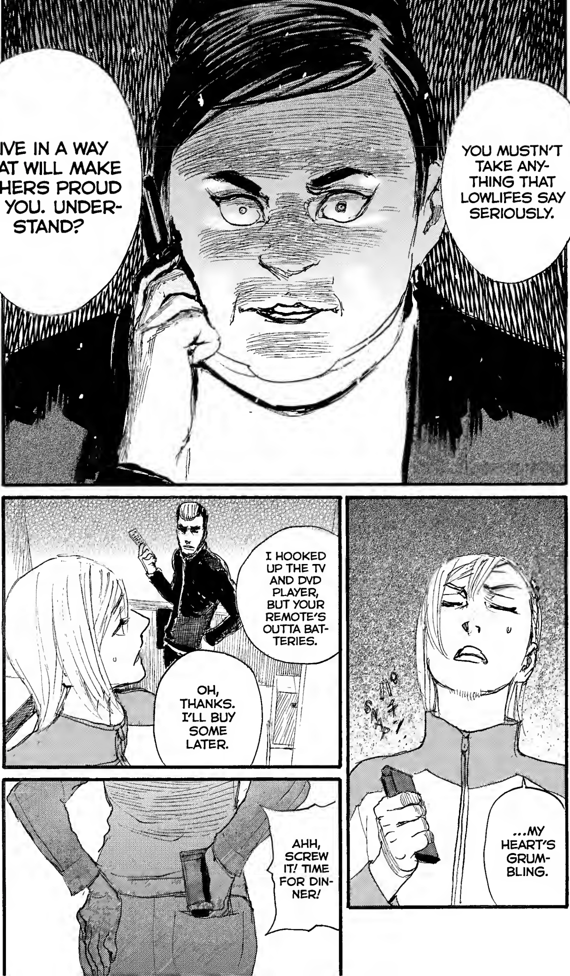

I'M EXCITED. I'VE NEVER BEEN OVERSEAS BEFORE.
I'LL BE SURE TO WATCH... WHAT WAS IT AGAIN?
OH, YEAH. MONTY PYTHON.
IT'S ON BBC, BUT I HEARD IT'S GOING TO BE AIRED IN JAPAN SOON, TOO.
OKAY. I SHOULD GET GOING.
YOU'D BETTER USE THAT, YOU HEAR? I SPENT ALL OF MY NEW YEAR'S BONUS ON IT.
IT'S THE NEWEST VERSION THAT JUST CAME OUT. IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE HARD FOR YOU TO USE.
AS USUAL, YOU NEVER UNDERSTAND HOW PEOPLE FEEL.
THE REASON I LOOK SO DOWN...

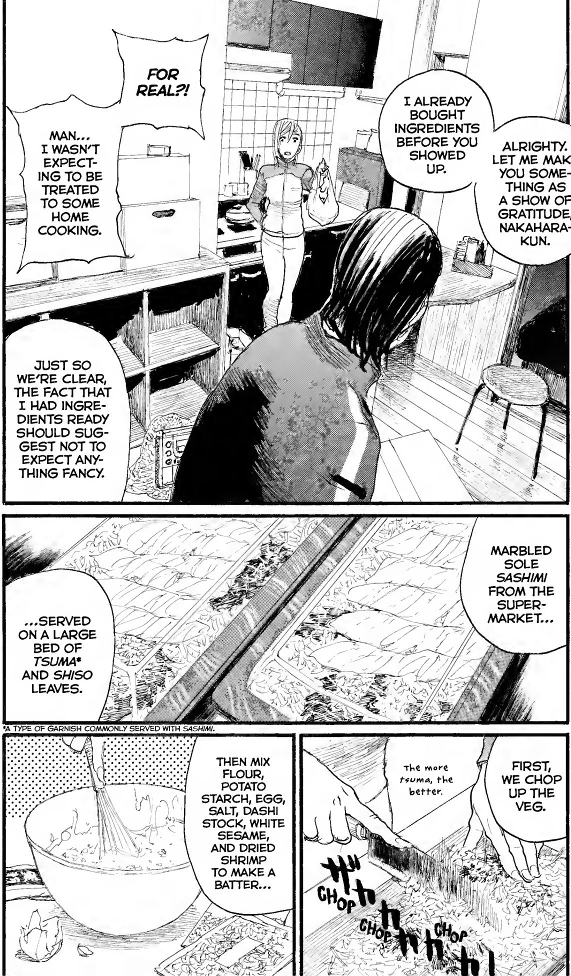

...IS BECAUSE I KNOW THAT THIS IS A DREAM FROM DECADES AGO...
...AND THAT YOU'RE EVENTUALLY GOING TO FALL VICTIM TO A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT AT YOUR DESTINATION.


YEAH! THE SALTED SALMON!
FOUR WHOLE FISH, NO LESS!
PLEASE STOP SENDING THINGS I CAN'T FIT IN THE FRIDGE... AHH, SO IT WAS DAD? MAN, THIS IS WHY SHOWA-ERA GEEZERS ARE SUCH A PAIN.

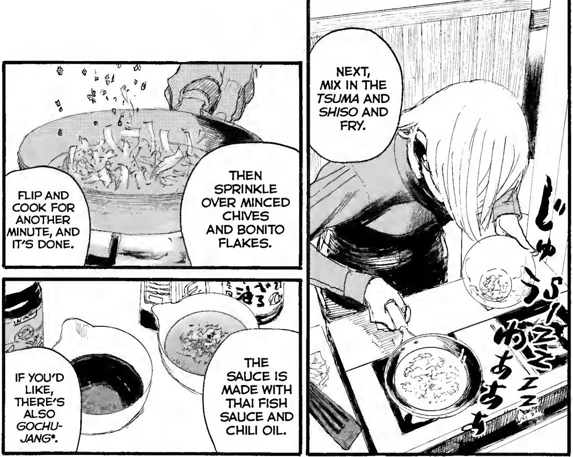

MY COWORKER SAID HE'D TAKE ONE, BUT... NO! LIKE I JUST SAID...
...I CAN'T DUMP THEM ON MY NEIGHBORS WHEN I KNOW THEY WON'T FIT IN THE FRIDGE, RIGHT?
CHILLED MUTTON OR SOMETHING WOULD'VE BEEN WAY BETTER!
...HUH? YOU SENT MEAT TWO YEARS AGO? REALLY? OH...
WANT ME TO HOOK UP THE TV?
YEAH, THANKS. THE DVD PLAYER, TOO, IF YOU DON'T MIND.
WHERE WAS I? ANYWAY, NO MORE SALMON, OKAY?
OH, AND ...
...THERE WAS THIS HUGE LUMP OF PACKING, AND WHEN I OPENED IT UP...


...I FOUND THIS SUPER RANK RADIO FROM GOD KNOWS WHEN INSIDE.
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THIS?!
AHH. YOUR FATHER INSISTED ON SENDING IT.
DON'T ASK ME. I HAVE NO IDEA WHY.
FORGET ABOUT THAT.
I HEARD YOU'RE WORKING IN RADIO NOW.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?
WELL...IT'S NOT REALLY A JOB I CAN BOAST ABOUT. THE PAY'S...
NOT REALLY UP TO LABOR STANDARDS.
But you told your father... Ahh, how sad. Mama's so sad, dear.
HEY, HE DIDN'T HEAR IT FROM ME!
Did your father say anything?
WHAT WAS IT...? "THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS BEING A LAUGHINGSTOCK," OR SOMETHING.
AHH. THAT SOUNDS LIKE HIM.
HO HO HO...
MINARE.

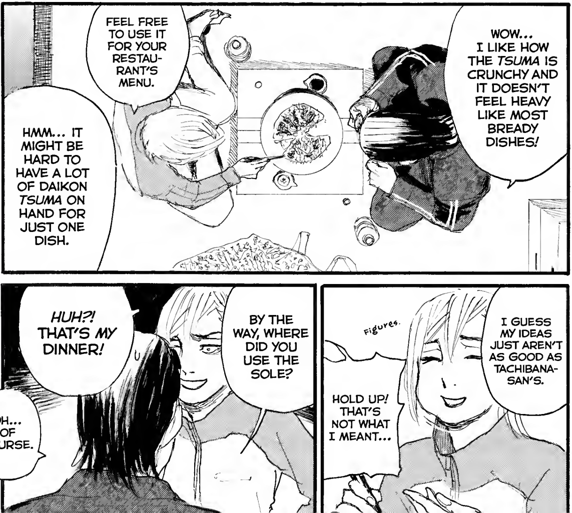

YOU MUSTN'T TAKE ANYTHING THAT LOWLIFES SAY SERIOUSLY.
LIVE IN A WAY THAT WILL MAKE OTHERS PROUD OF YOU. UNDERSTAND?
I HOOKED UP THE TV AND DVD PLAYER, BUT YOUR REMOTE'S OUTTA BATTERIES.
OH, THANKS. I'LL BUY SOME LATER.
SNAP!
...MY HEART'S GRUMBLING.
AHH, SCREW IT! TIME FOR DINNER!

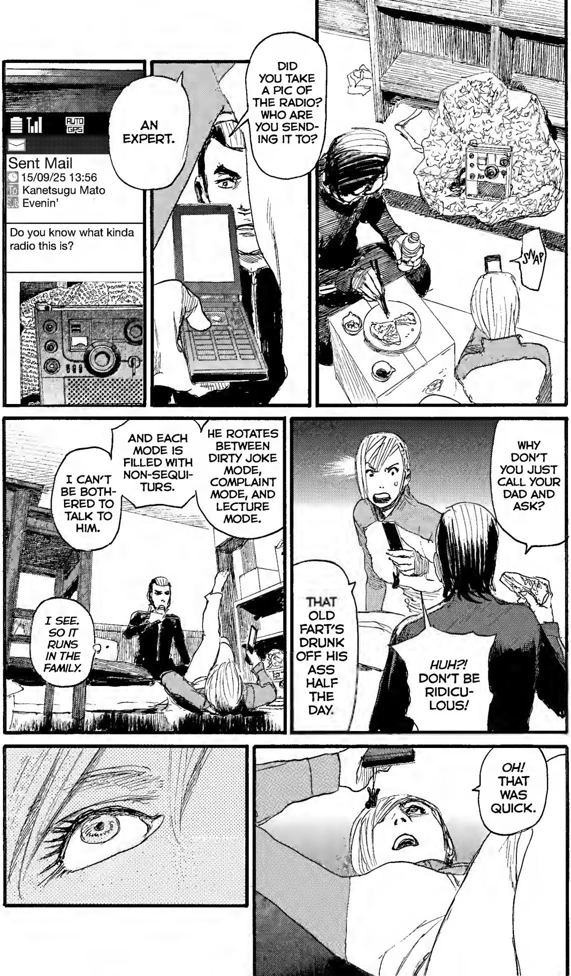

ALRIGHTY. LET ME MAKE YOU SOMETHING AS A SHOW OF GRATITUDE, NAKAHARA-KUN.
FOR REAL?!
MAN... I WASN'T EXPECTING TO BE TREATED TO SOME HOME COOKING.
I ALREADY BOUGHT INGREDIENTS BEFORE YOU SHOWED UP.
JUST SO WE'RE CLEAR, THE FACT THAT I HAD INGREDIENTS READY SHOULD SUGGEST NOT TO EXPECT ANYTHING FANCY.
MARBLED SOLE *SASHIMI* FROM THE SUPERMARKET...
...SERVED ON A LARGE BED OF *TSUMA** AND *SHISO* LEAVES.
FIRST, WE CHOP UP THE VEG.
The more *tsuma*, the better.
CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
THEN MIX FLOUR, POTATO STARCH, EGG, SALT, DASHI STOCK, WHITE SESAME, AND DRIED SHRIMP TO MAKE A BATTER...

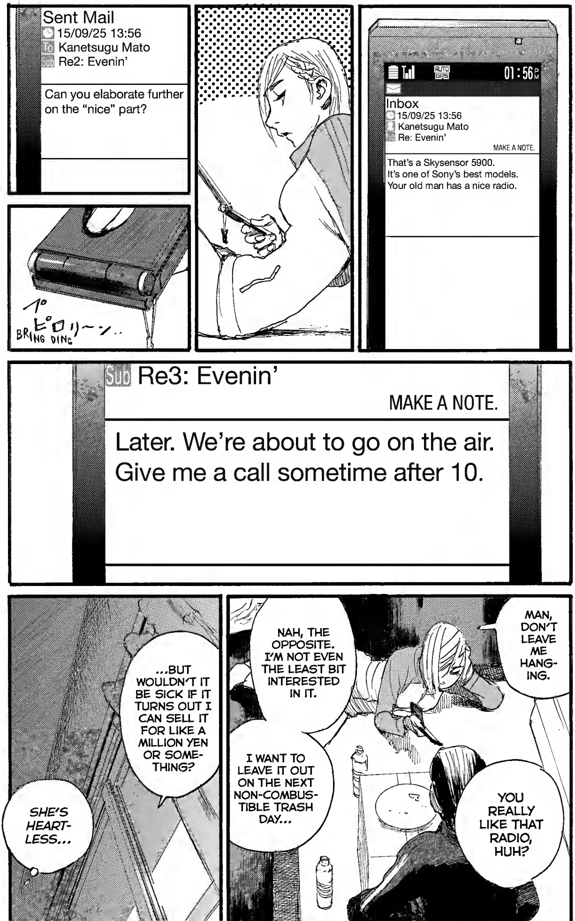
*A TYPE OF GARNISH COMMONLY SERVED WITH *SASHIMI*.


NEXT, MIX IN THE *TSUMA* AND *SHISO* AND FRY.
じゅう〜
ZZZZ
あちち
THEN SPRINKLE OVER MINCED CHIVES AND BONITO FLAKES.
FLIP AND COOK FOR ANOTHER MINUTE, AND IT'S DONE.
THE SAUCE IS MADE WITH THAI FISH SAUCE AND CHILI OIL.
IF YOU'D LIKE, THERE'S ALSO *GOCHUJANG**.

*A SPICY KOREAN CONDIMENT CHILI AND SOYBEANS.


WOW... I LIKE HOW THE *TSUMA* IS CRUNCHY AND IT DOESN'T FEEL HEAVY LIKE MOST BREADY DISHES!
FEEL FREE TO USE IT FOR YOUR RESTAURANT'S MENU.
HMM... IT MIGHT BE HARD TO HAVE A LOT OF DAIKON *TSUMA* ON HAND FOR JUST ONE DISH.
I GUESS MY IDEAS JUST AREN'T AS GOOD AS TACHIBANA-SAN'S.
Figures.
HOLD UP! THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT...
BY THE WAY, WHERE DID YOU USE THE SOLE?
HUH?! THAT'S MY DINNER!
OH... OF COURSE.


SNAP
DID YOU TAKE A PIC OF THE RADIO? WHO ARE YOU SENDING IT TO?
AN EXPERT.
AUTO GPS
Sent Mail
15/09/25 13:56
Kanetsugu Mato
Evenin'
Do you know what kinda radio this is?
WHY DON'T YOU JUST CALL YOUR DAD AND ASK?
HUH?! DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!
THAT OLD FART'S DRUNK OFF HIS ASS HALF THE DAY.
HE ROTATES BETWEEN DIRTY JOKE MODE, COMPLAINT MODE, AND LECTURE MODE.
AND EACH MODE IS FILLED WITH NON-SEQUITURS.
I CAN'T BE BOTHERED TO TALK TO HIM.
I SEE. SO IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY.
OH! THAT WAS QUICK.



AUTO GPS
01:56 PM

Inbox
15/09/25 13:56
Kanetsugu Mato
Re: Evenin'
MAKE A NOTE.

That's a Skysensor 5900.
It's one of Sony's best models.
Your old man has a nice radio.

Sent Mail
15/09/25 13:56
To Kanetsugu Mato
Sub Re2: Evenin'

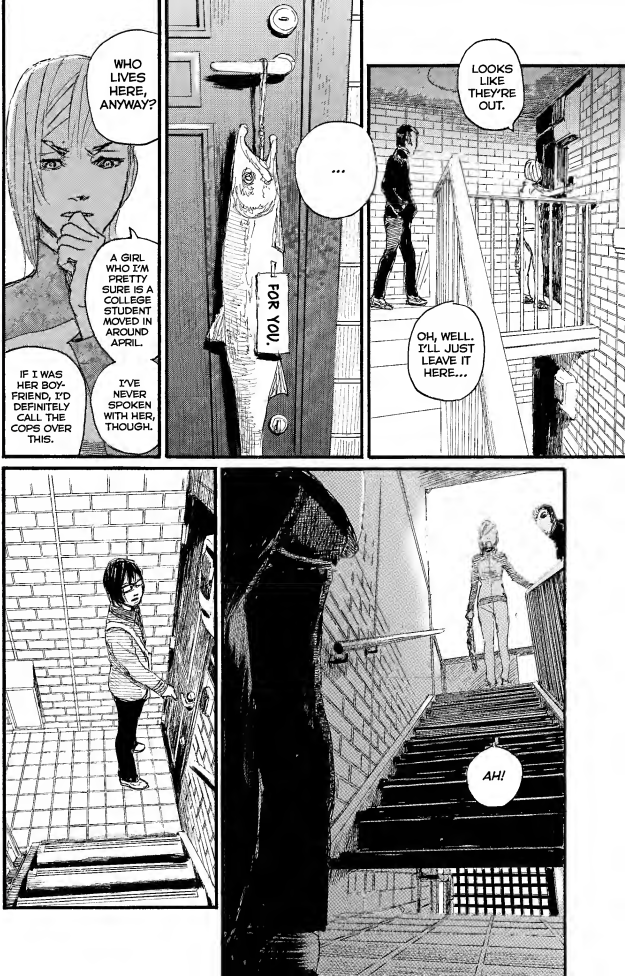
Can you elaborate further on the "nice" part?

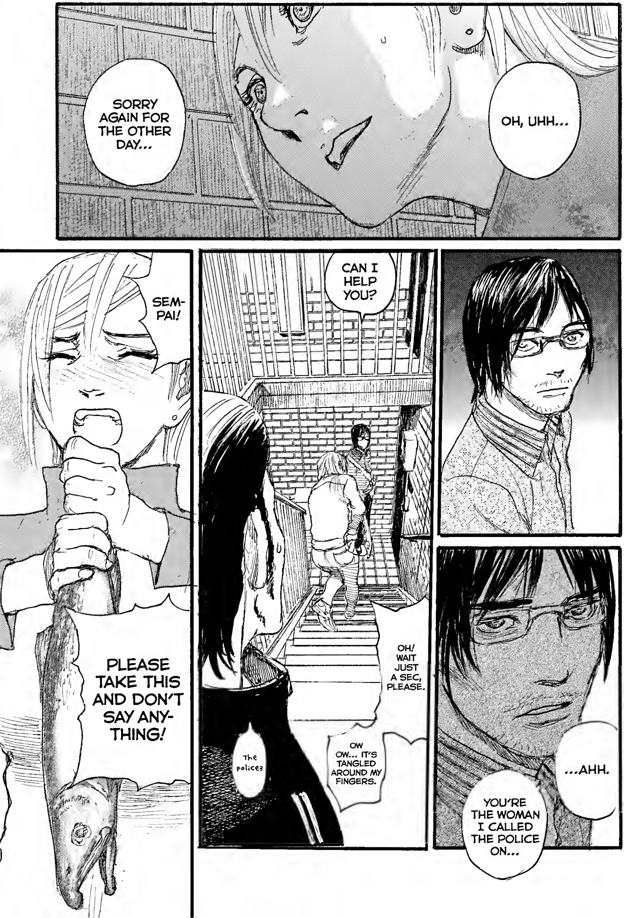
プ ピロリ～ン..
BRING DING

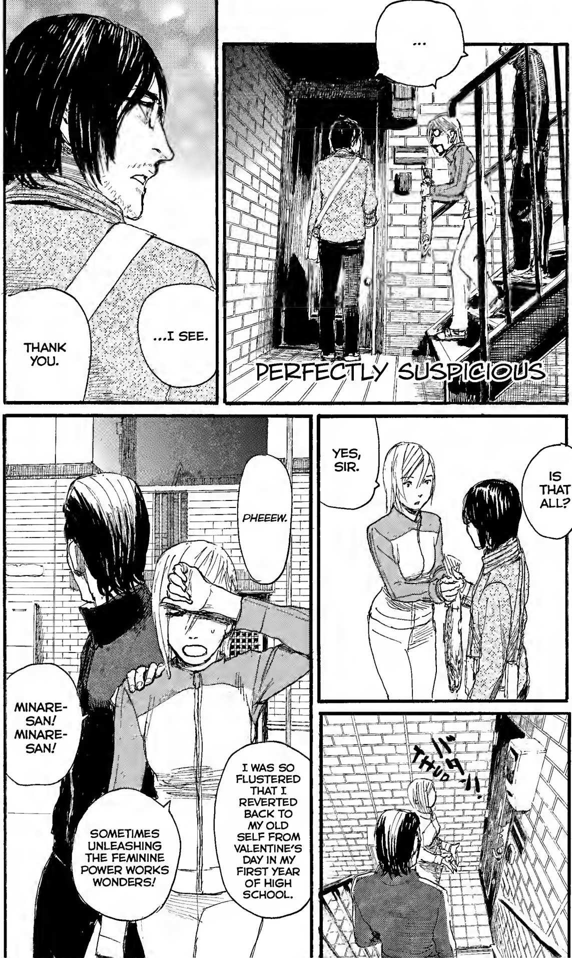
Sub Re3: Evenin'
MAKE A NOTE.

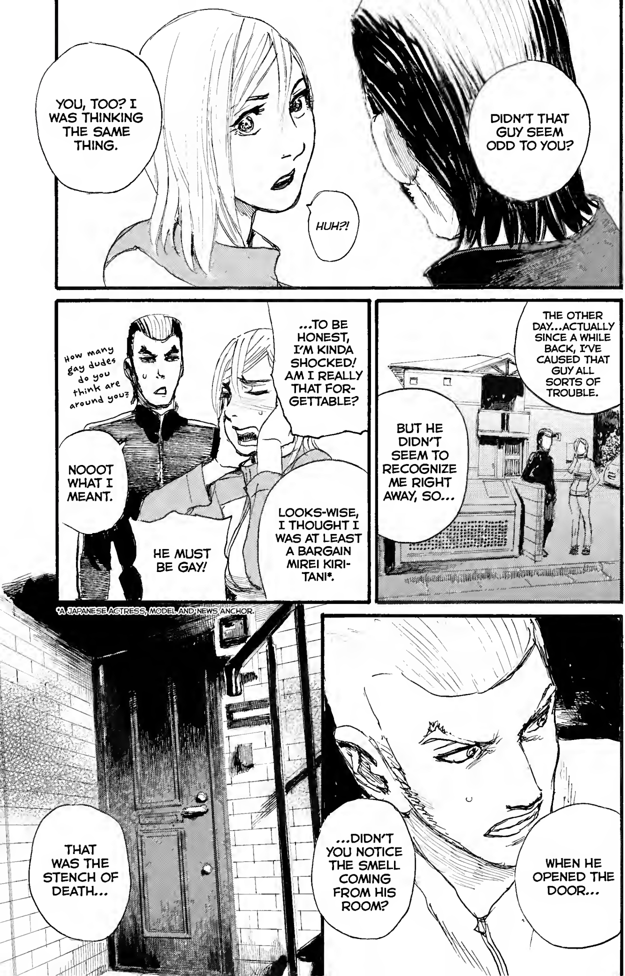
Later. We're about to go on the air.
Give me a call sometime after 10.

MAN, DON'T LEAVE ME HANGING.
YOU REALLY LIKE THAT RADIO, HUH?
NAH, THE OPPOSITE. I'M NOT EVEN THE LEAST BIT INTERESTED IN IT.
I WANT TO LEAVE IT OUT ON THE NEXT NON-COMBUSTIBLE TRASH DAY...
...BUT WOULDN'T IT BE SICK IF IT TURNS OUT I CAN SELL IT FOR LIKE A MILLION YEN OR SOMETHING?
SHE'S HEARTLESS...

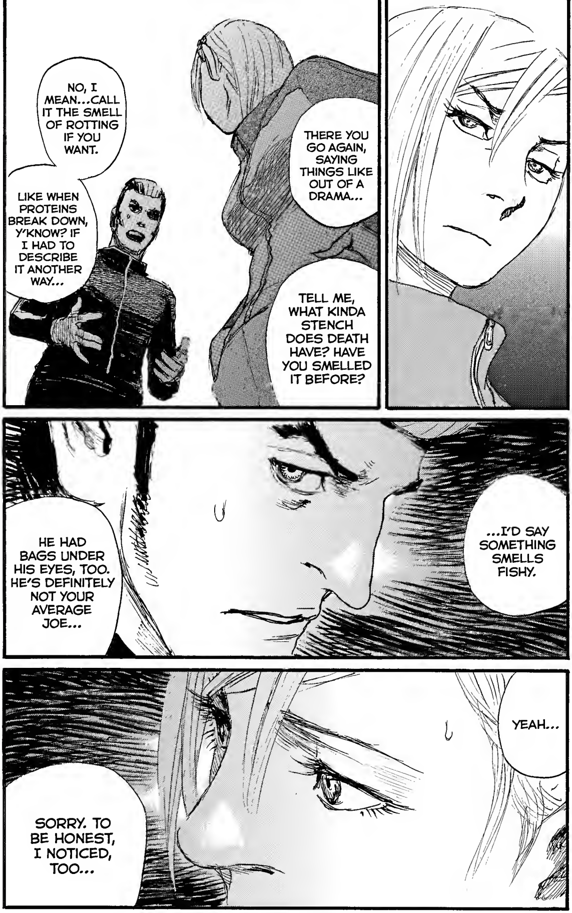

LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE OUT.
OH, WELL. I'LL JUST LEAVE IT HERE...
...
FOR YOU.
WHO LIVES HERE, ANYWAY?
A GIRL WHO I'M PRETTY SURE IS A COLLEGE STUDENT MOVED IN AROUND APRIL.
I'VE NEVER SPOKEN WITH HER, THOUGH.
IF I WAS HER BOYFRIEND, I'D DEFINITELY CALL THE COPS OVER THIS.
AH!

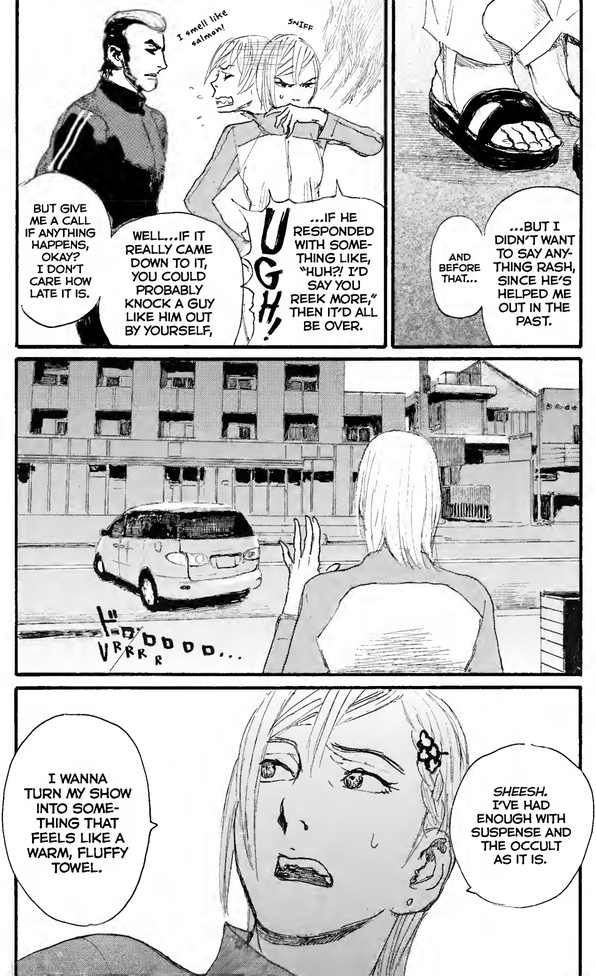

OH, UHH…
SORRY AGAIN FOR THE OTHER DAY…
CAN I HELP YOU?
…AHH.
YOU'RE THE WOMAN I CALLED THE POLICE ON…
OH! WAIT JUST A SEC, PLEASE.
OW OW… IT'S TANGLED AROUND MY FINGERS.
The police?
SEMPAI!
PLEASE TAKE THIS AND DON'T SAY ANYTHING!

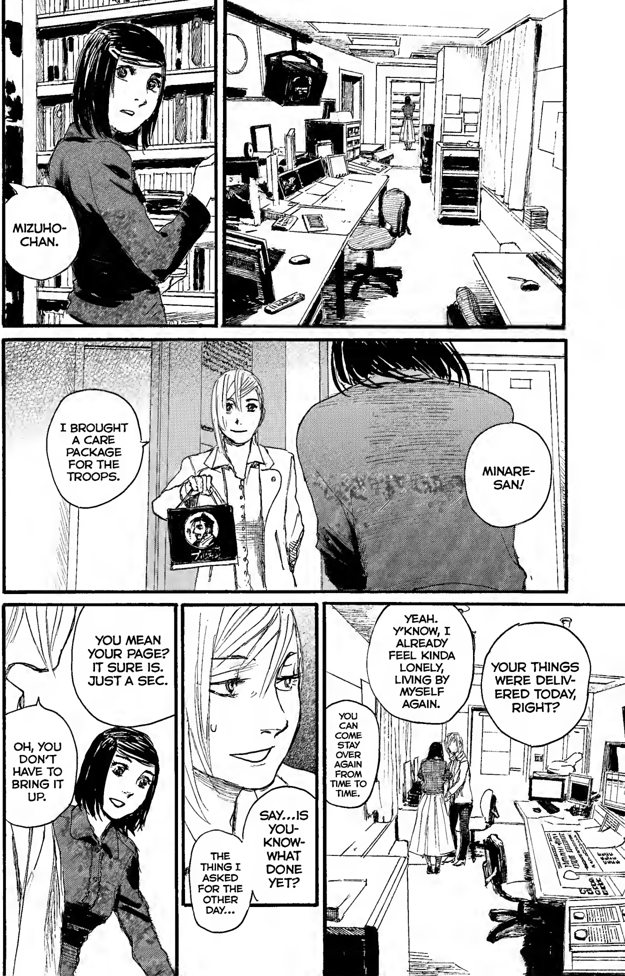

...
PERFECTLY SUSPICIOUS
...I SEE.
THANK YOU.
IS THAT ALL?
YES, SIR.
バタン
THUD
PHEEEW.
I WAS SO FLUSTERED THAT I REVERTED BACK TO MY OLD SELF FROM VALENTINE'S DAY IN MY FIRST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL.
MINARE-SAN! MINARE-SAN!
SOMETIMES UNLEASHING THE FEMININE POWER WORKS WONDERS!

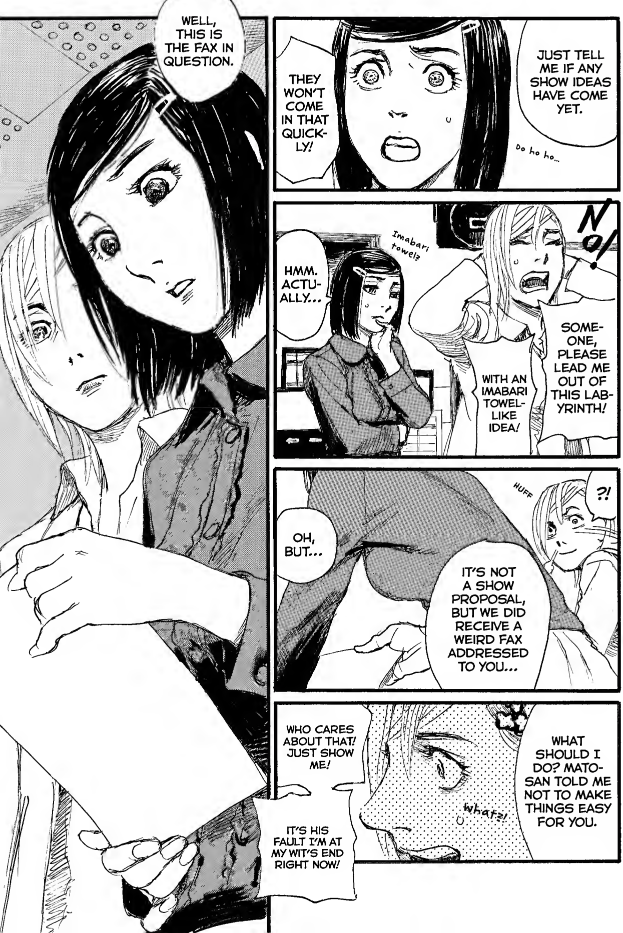

DIDN'T THAT GUY SEEM ODD TO YOU?
HUH?!
YOU, TOO? I WAS THINKING THE SAME THING.
THE OTHER DAY...ACTUALLY SINCE A WHILE BACK, I'VE CAUSED THAT GUY ALL SORTS OF TROUBLE.
BUT HE DIDN'T SEEM TO RECOGNIZE ME RIGHT AWAY, SO...
...TO BE HONEST, I'M KINDA SHOCKED! AM I REALLY THAT FORGETTABLE?
LOOKS-WISE, I THOUGHT I WAS AT LEAST A BARGAIN MIREI KIRITANI*.
HE MUST BE GAY!
NOOOT WHAT I MEANT.
How many gay dudes do you think are around you?
WHEN HE OPENED THE DOOR...
...DIDN'T YOU NOTICE THE SMELL COMING FROM HIS ROOM?
THAT WAS THE STENCH OF DEATH...

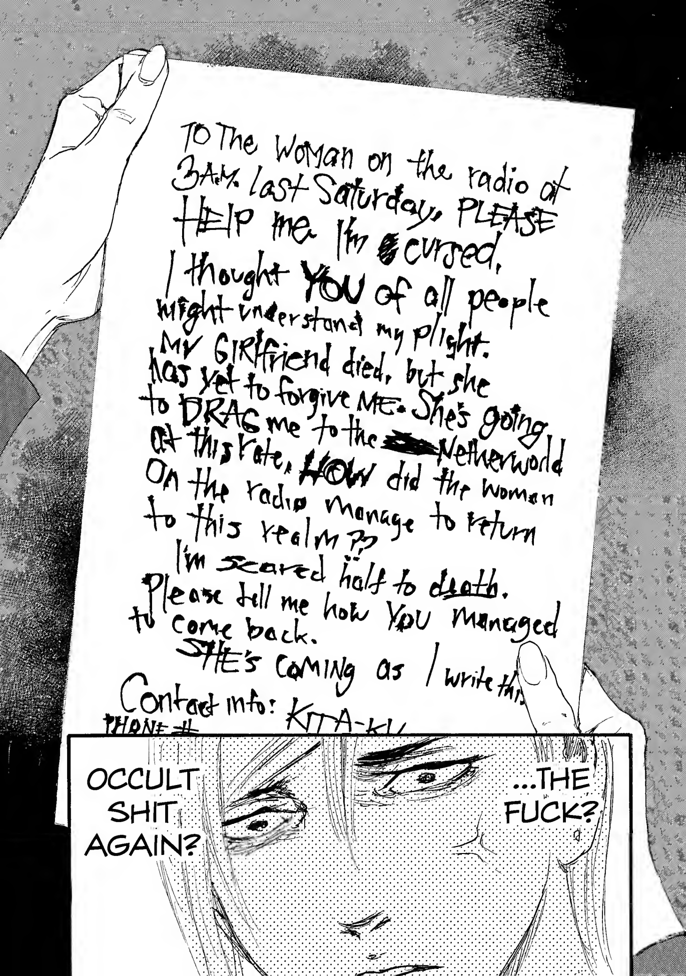
*A JAPANESE ACTRESS, MODEL AND NEWS ANCHOR.


THERE YOU GO AGAIN, SAYING THINGS LIKE OUT OF A DRAMA...
TELL ME, WHAT KINDA STENCH DOES DEATH HAVE? HAVE YOU SMELLED IT BEFORE?
NO, I MEAN...CALL IT THE SMELL OF ROTTING IF YOU WANT.
LIKE WHEN PROTEINS BREAK DOWN, Y'KNOW? IF I HAD TO DESCRIBE IT ANOTHER WAY...
...I'D SAY SOMETHING SMELLS FISHY.
HE HAD BAGS UNDER HIS EYES, TOO. HE'S DEFINITELY NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOE...
YEAH...
SORRY. TO BE HONEST, I NOTICED, TOO...

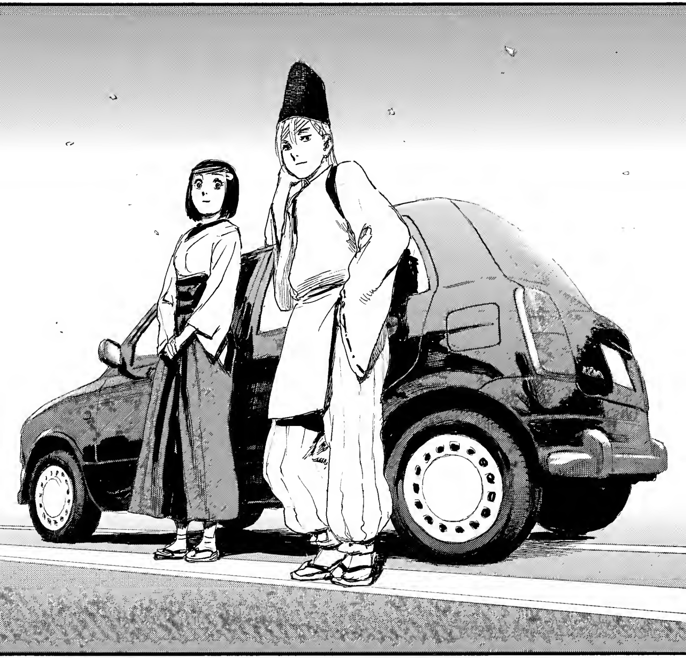

...BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO SAY ANYTHING RASH, SINCE HE'S HELPED ME OUT IN THE PAST.
AND BEFORE THAT...
...IF HE RESPONDED WITH SOMETHING LIKE, "HUH?! I'D SAY YOU REEK MORE," THEN IT'D ALL BE OVER.
UGH!
SNIFF
I smell like salmon!
WELL...IF IT REALLY CAME DOWN TO IT, YOU COULD PROBABLY KNOCK A GUY LIKE HIM OUT BY YOURSELF,
BUT GIVE ME A CALL IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, OKAY? I DON'T CARE HOW LATE IT IS.
VRRRR DDDDD...
SHEESH. I'VE HAD ENOUGH WITH SUSPENSE AND THE OCCULT AS IT IS.
I WANNA TURN MY SHOW INTO SOMETHING THAT FEELS LIKE A WARM, FLUFFY TOWEL.


MIZUHO-CHAN.
MINARE-SAN!
I BROUGHT A CARE PACKAGE FOR THE TROOPS.
YOUR THINGS WERE DELIVERED TODAY, RIGHT?
YEAH. Y'KNOW, I ALREADY FEEL KINDA LONELY, LIVING BY MYSELF AGAIN.
YOU CAN COME STAY OVER AGAIN FROM TIME TO TIME.
SAY...IS YOU-KNOW-WHAT DONE YET?
THE THING I ASKED FOR THE OTHER DAY...
YOU MEAN YOUR PAGE? IT SURE IS. JUST A SEC.
OH, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BRING IT UP.

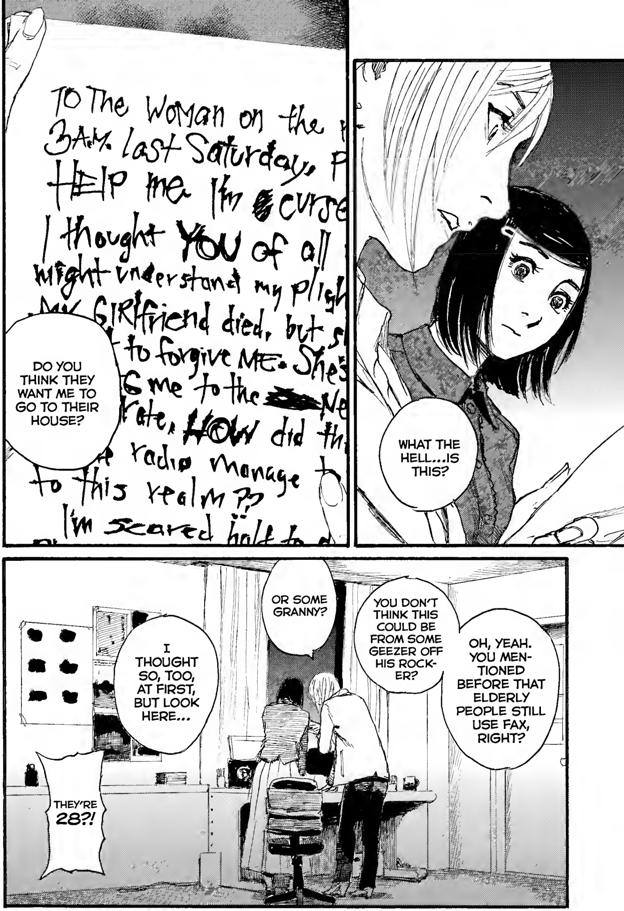

JUST TELL ME IF ANY SHOW IDEAS HAVE COME YET.
Do ho ho...
THEY WON'T COME IN THAT QUICKLY!
NO!
SOMEONE, PLEASE LEAD ME OUT OF THIS LABYRINTH!
WITH AN IMABARI TOWEL-LIKE IDEA!
Imabari towelz
HMM. ACTUALLY...
?!
HUFF
IT'S NOT A SHOW PROPOSAL, BUT WE DID RECEIVE A WEIRD FAX ADDRESSED TO YOU...
OH, BUT...
WHAT SHOULD I DO? MATO-SAN TOLD ME NOT TO MAKE THINGS EASY FOR YOU.
Whatz!
WHO CARES ABOUT THAT! JUST SHOW ME!
IT'S HIS FAULT I'M AT MY WIT'S END RIGHT NOW!
WELL, THIS IS THE FAX IN QUESTION.



TO The WOMAN on the radio at
3A.M. last Saturday. PLEASE
HELP me. I'm cursed.
I thought YOU of all people
might understand my plight.
MY GIRLfriend died, but she
has yet to forgive ME. She's going
to DRAG me to the Netherworld
at this rate. HOW did the woman
On the radio manage to return
to this realm??
I'm scared half to death.
Please tell me how YOU managed
to come back.
SHE's COMING as I write thi
Contact info: KITA-KU
PHONE #

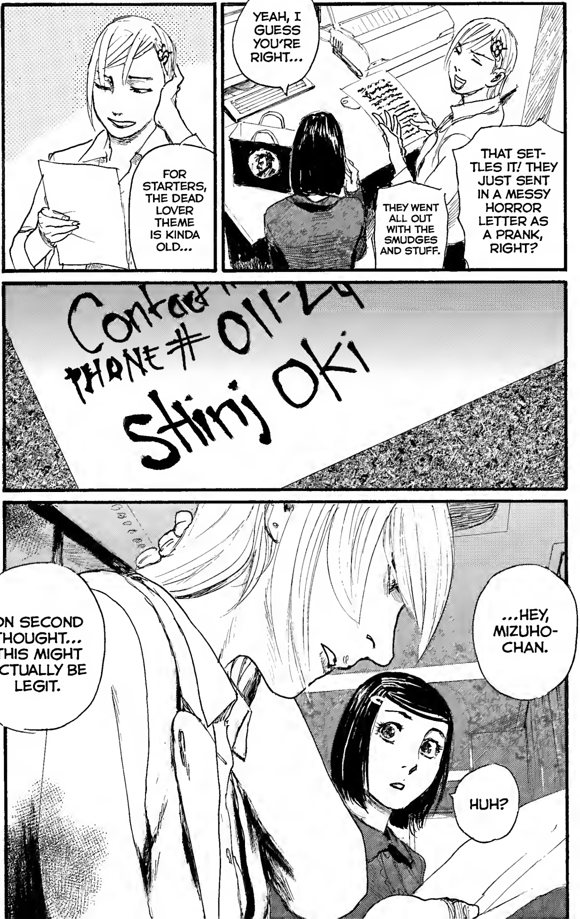


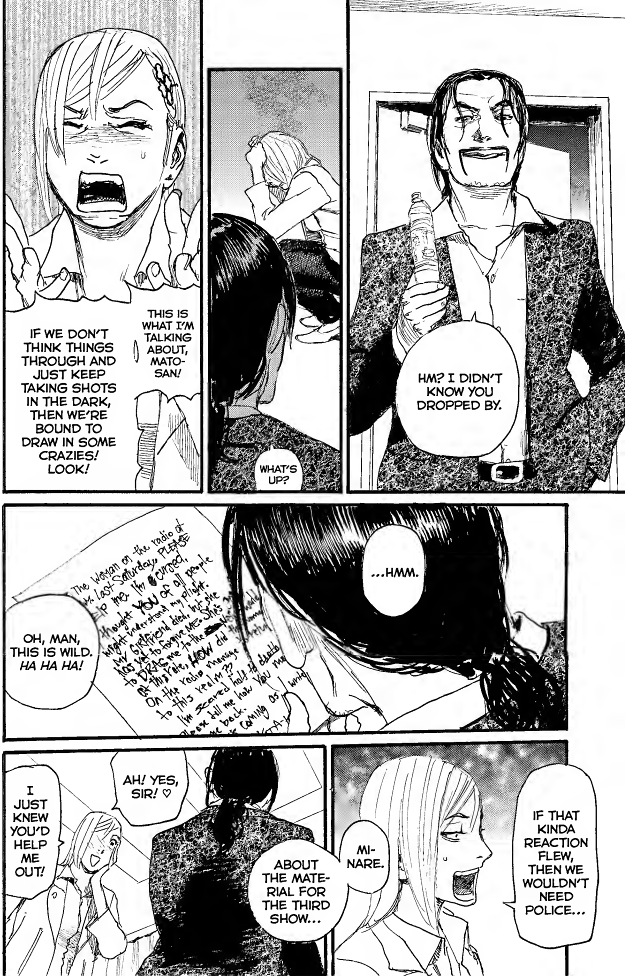
Chapter 20 「THEY DON'T EXIST.」

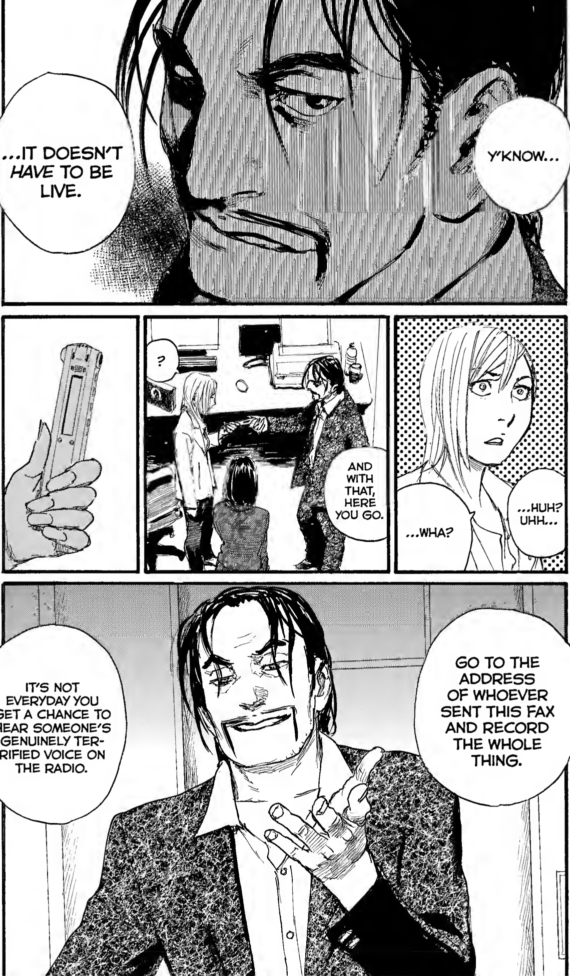


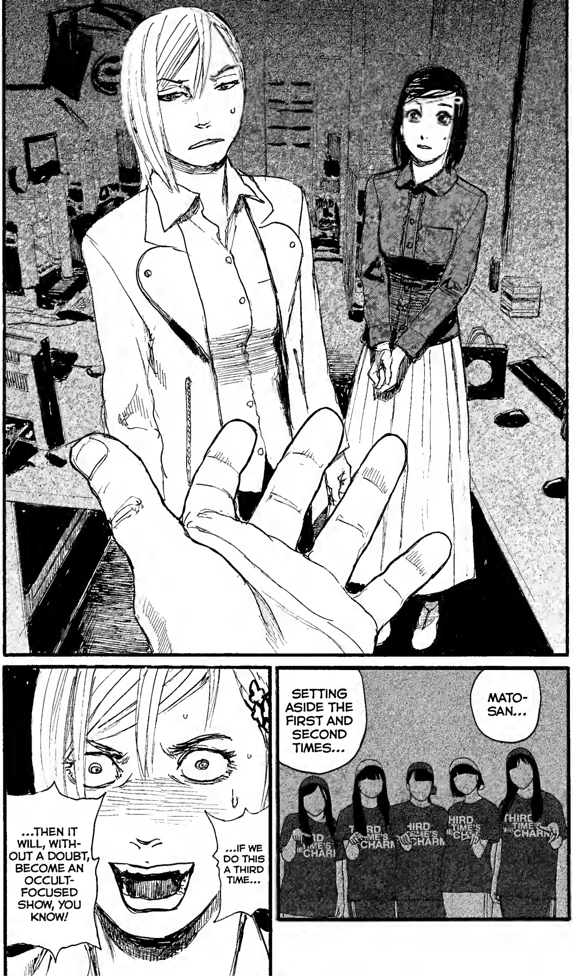
TO The Woman on the
3A.M. last Saturday,
HELP me. I'm curse
I thought YOU of all
might understand my pligh
My GIRLfriend died, but s
to forgive ME. She's
g me to the Ne
rate. HOW did th
radio manage t
to this realm??
I'm scared half to d

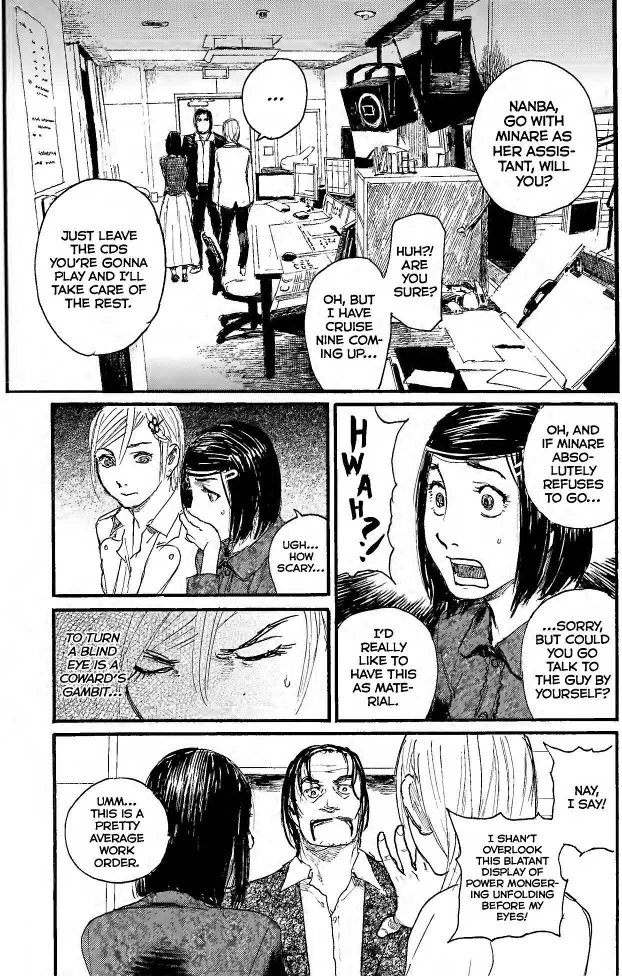
WHAT THE HELL...IS THIS?
DO YOU THINK THEY WANT ME TO GO TO THEIR HOUSE?
OH, YEAH. YOU MENTIONED BEFORE THAT ELDERLY PEOPLE STILL USE FAX, RIGHT?
YOU DON'T THINK THIS COULD BE FROM SOME GEEZER OFF HIS ROCKER?
OR SOME GRANNY?
I THOUGHT SO, TOO, AT FIRST, BUT LOOK HERE...
THEY'RE 28?!

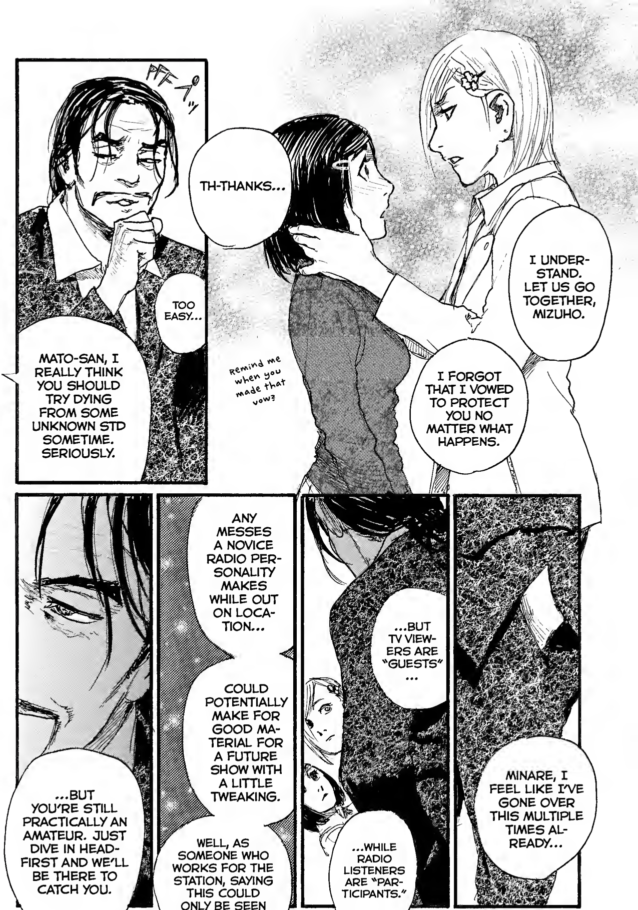

THAT SETTLES IT! THEY JUST SENT IN A MESSY HORROR LETTER AS A PRANK, RIGHT?
THEY WENT ALL OUT WITH THE SMUDGES AND STUFF.
YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...
FOR STARTERS, THE DEAD LOVER THEME IS KINDA OLD...
Contad
PHONE # 011-24
Shinj Oki
...HEY, MIZUHO-CHAN.
HUH?
ON SECOND THOUGHT... THIS MIGHT ACTUALLY BE LEGIT.

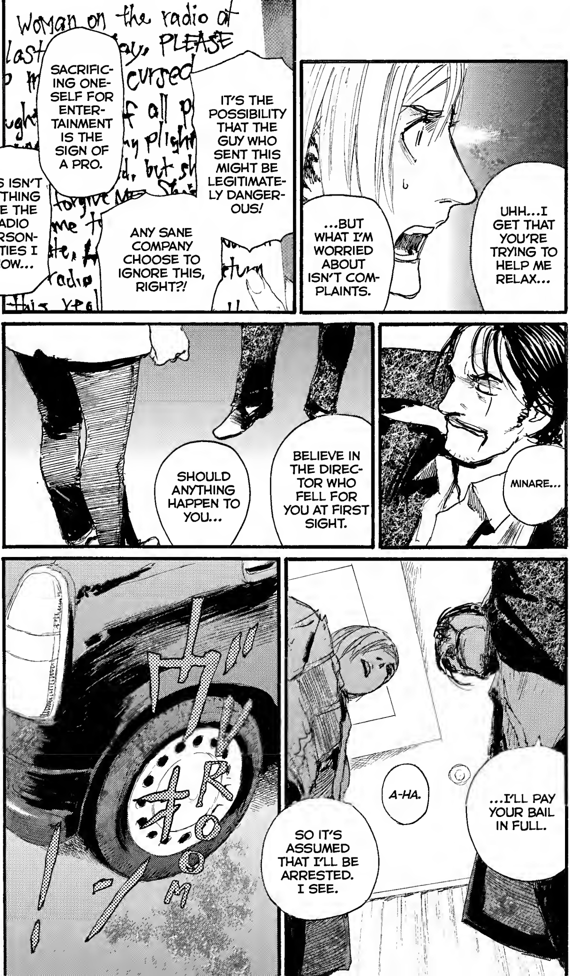

HM? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU DROPPED BY.
WHAT'S UP?
THIS IS WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, MATO-SAN!
IF WE DON'T THINK THINGS THROUGH AND JUST KEEP TAKING SHOTS IN THE DARK, THEN WE'RE BOUND TO DRAW IN SOME CRAZIES! LOOK!
...HMM.
The Woman on the radio at
M. last Saturday, PLEASE
p me. I'm cursed.
thought YOU of all people
might understand my plight.
My GIRLfriend died, but she
has yet to forgive ME. She's
to DRAG me to the
at this rate. HOW did
On the radio manage
to this realm??
I'm scared half to death
Please tell me how YOU m
me back.
COMING as
write
OH, MAN, THIS IS WILD. *HA HA HA!*
IF THAT KINDA REACTION FLEW, THEN WE WOULDN'T NEED POLICE...
MI-NARE.
ABOUT THE MATERIAL FOR THE THIRD SHOW...
AH! YES, SIR! ♡
I JUST KNEW YOU'D HELP ME OUT!

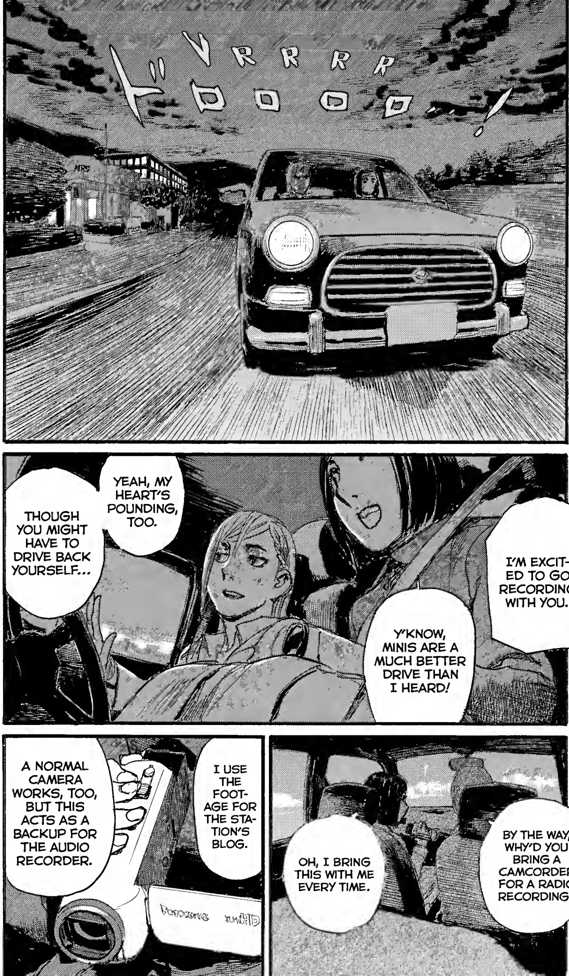

Y'KNOW...
...IT DOESN'T *HAVE* TO BE LIVE.
...HUH? UHH...
...WHA?
?
AND WITH THAT, HERE YOU GO.
GO TO THE ADDRESS OF WHOEVER SENT THIS FAX AND RECORD THE WHOLE THING.
IT'S NOT EVERYDAY YOU GET A CHANCE TO HEAR SOMEONE'S GENUINELY TERRIFIED VOICE ON THE RADIO.

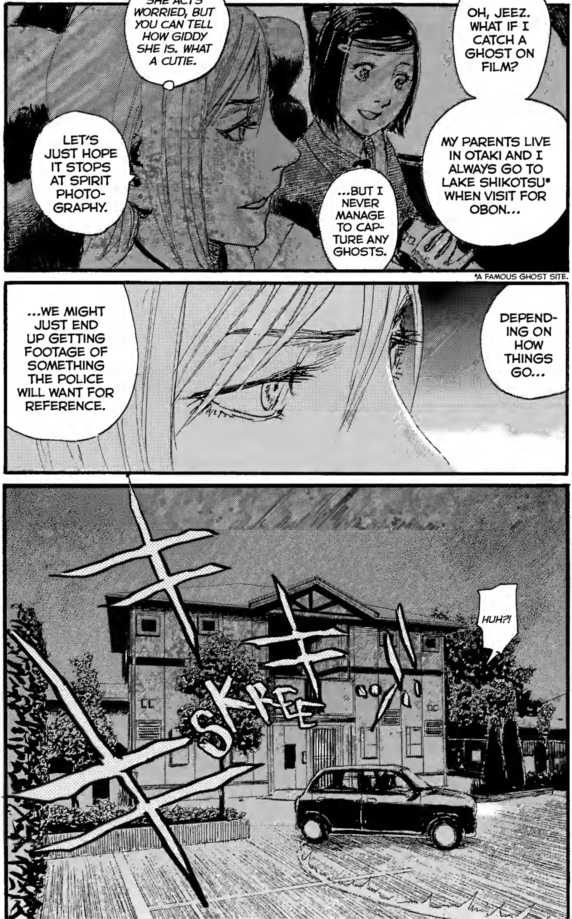

MATO-SAN...
SETTING ASIDE THE FIRST AND SECOND TIMES...
THIRD TIME'S CHARM
...IF WE DO THIS A THIRD TIME...
...THEN IT WILL, WITHOUT A DOUBT, BECOME AN OCCULT-FOCUSED SHOW, YOU KNOW!


NANBA, GO WITH MINARE AS HER ASSISTANT, WILL YOU?
...
HUH?! ARE YOU SURE?
OH, BUT I HAVE CRUISE NINE COMING UP...
JUST LEAVE THE CDS YOU'RE GONNA PLAY AND I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REST.
OH, AND IF MINARE ABSOLUTELY REFUSES TO GO...
...SORRY, BUT COULD YOU GO TALK TO THE GUY BY YOURSELF?
HWAH?!
I'D REALLY LIKE TO HAVE THIS AS MATERIAL.
UGH... HOW SCARY...
TO TURN A BLIND EYE IS A COWARD'S GAMBIT...
NAY, I SAY!
I SHAN'T OVERLOOK THIS BLATANT DISPLAY OF POWER MONGERING UNFOLDING BEFORE MY EYES!
UMM... THIS IS A PRETTY AVERAGE WORK ORDER.

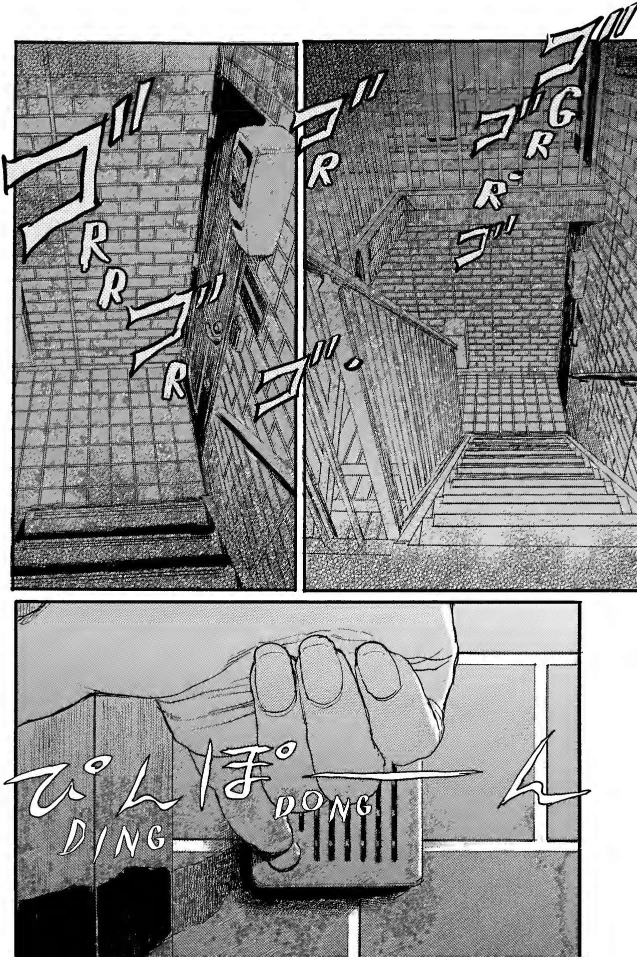

I UNDERSTAND. LET US GO TOGETHER, MIZUHO.
I FORGOT THAT I VOWED TO PROTECT YOU NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.
Remind me when you made that vow?
TH-THANKS...
PFF
TOO EASY...
MATO-SAN, I REALLY THINK YOU SHOULD TRY DYING FROM SOME UNKNOWN STD SOMETIME. SERIOUSLY.
MINARE, I FEEL LIKE I'VE GONE OVER THIS MULTIPLE TIMES ALREADY...
...BUT TV VIEWERS ARE "GUESTS"...
...WHILE RADIO LISTENERS ARE "PARTICIPANTS."
ANY MESSES A NOVICE RADIO PERSONALITY MAKES WHILE OUT ON LOCATION...
COULD POTENTIALLY MAKE FOR GOOD MATERIAL FOR A FUTURE SHOW WITH A LITTLE TWEAKING.
WELL, AS SOMEONE WHO WORKS FOR THE STATION, SAYING THIS COULD ONLY BE SEEN AS ME BEING SOFT...
...BUT YOU'RE STILL PRACTICALLY AN AMATEUR. JUST DIVE IN HEADFIRST AND WE'LL BE THERE TO CATCH YOU.


UHH...I GET THAT YOU'RE TRYING TO HELP ME RELAX...
...BUT WHAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT ISN'T COMPLAINTS.
Woman on the radio at last ay, PLEASE cursed f all p plight d, but sh forgive Me me t radio this yea
IT'S THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GUY WHO SENT THIS MIGHT BE LEGITIMATELY DANGEROUS!
ANY SANE COMPANY CHOOSE TO IGNORE THIS, RIGHT?!
SACRIFICING ONESELF FOR ENTERTAINMENT IS THE SIGN OF A PRO.
THIS ISN'T ANYTHING LIKE THE RADIO PERSONALITIES I KNOW...
MINARE...
BELIEVE IN THE DIRECTOR WHO FELL FOR YOU AT FIRST SIGHT.
SHOULD ANYTHING HAPPEN TO YOU...
...I'LL PAY YOUR BAIL IN FULL.
A-HA.
SO IT'S ASSUMED THAT I'LL BE ARRESTED. I SEE.
ROOM


VRRRR
ドロロロ…!
MRS
I'M EXCITED TO GO RECORDING WITH YOU.
Y'KNOW, MINIS ARE A MUCH BETTER DRIVE THAN I HEARD!
YEAH, MY HEART'S POUNDING, TOO.
THOUGH YOU MIGHT HAVE TO DRIVE BACK YOURSELF...
BY THE WAY, WHY'D YOU BRING A CAMCORDER FOR A RADIO RECORDING?
OH, I BRING THIS WITH ME EVERY TIME.
I USE THE FOOTAGE FOR THE STATION'S BLOG.
A NORMAL CAMERA WORKS, TOO, BUT THIS ACTS AS A BACKUP FOR THE AUDIO RECORDER.


OH, JEEZ. WHAT IF I CATCH A GHOST ON FILM?
MY PARENTS LIVE IN OTAKI AND I ALWAYS GO TO LAKE SHIKOTSU* WHEN VISIT FOR OBON...
...BUT I NEVER MANAGE TO CAPTURE ANY GHOSTS.
SHE ACTS WORRIED, BUT YOU CAN TELL HOW GIDDY SHE IS. WHAT A CUTIE.
LET'S JUST HOPE IT STOPS AT SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY.
DEPENDING ON HOW THINGS GO...
...WE MIGHT JUST END UP GETTING FOOTAGE OF SOMETHING THE POLICE WILL WANT FOR REFERENCE.
HUH?!
SKREE

*A FAMOUS GHOST SITE.


ゴ G
ゴ R
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ゴ R
ゴ R R
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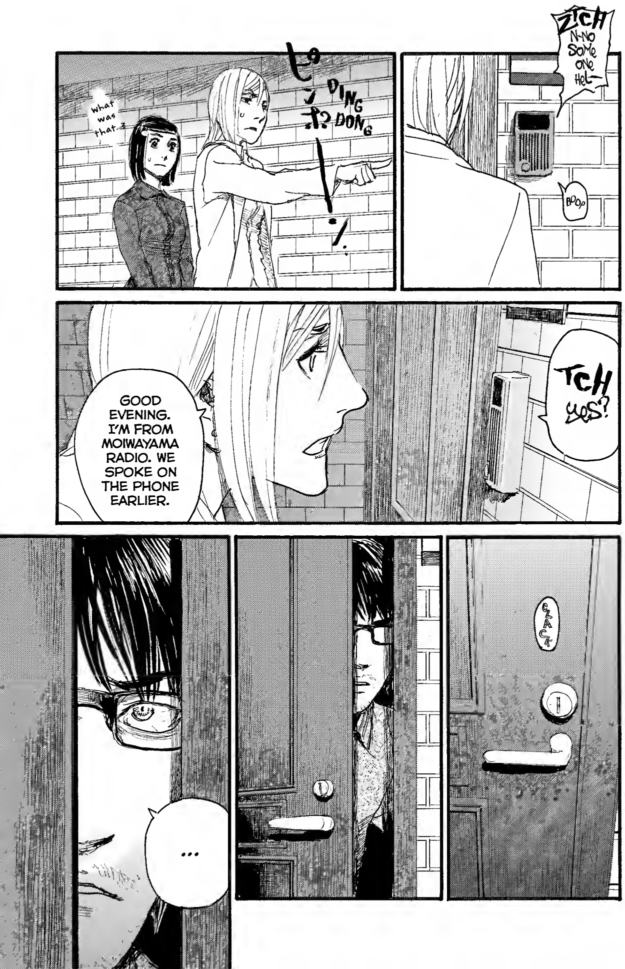
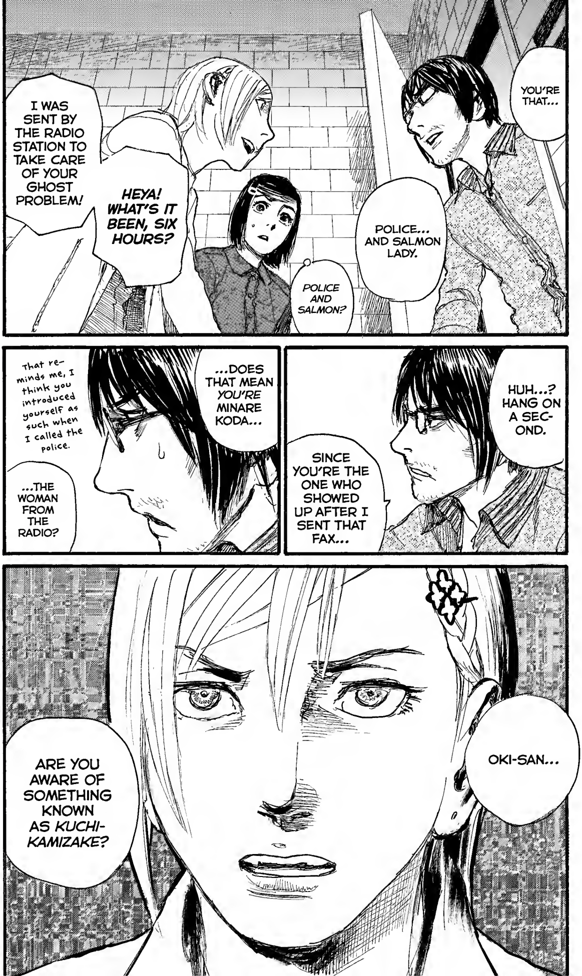
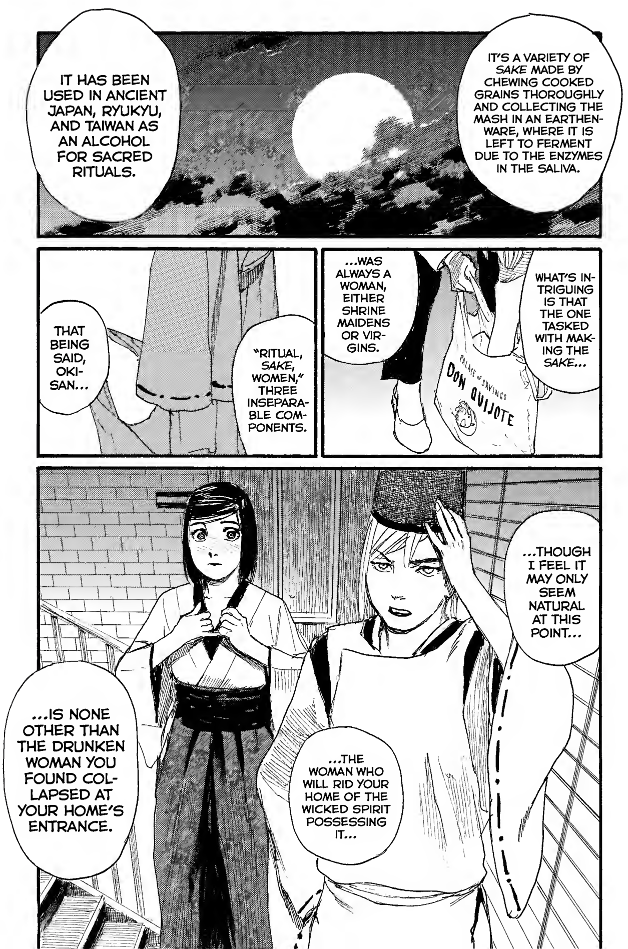
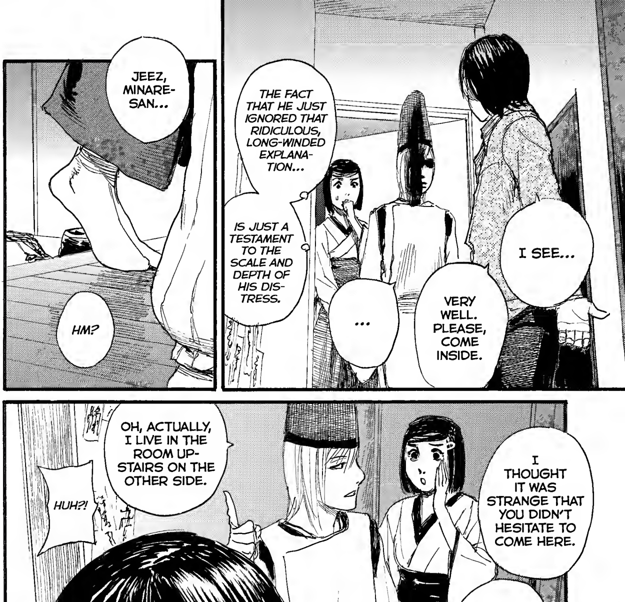
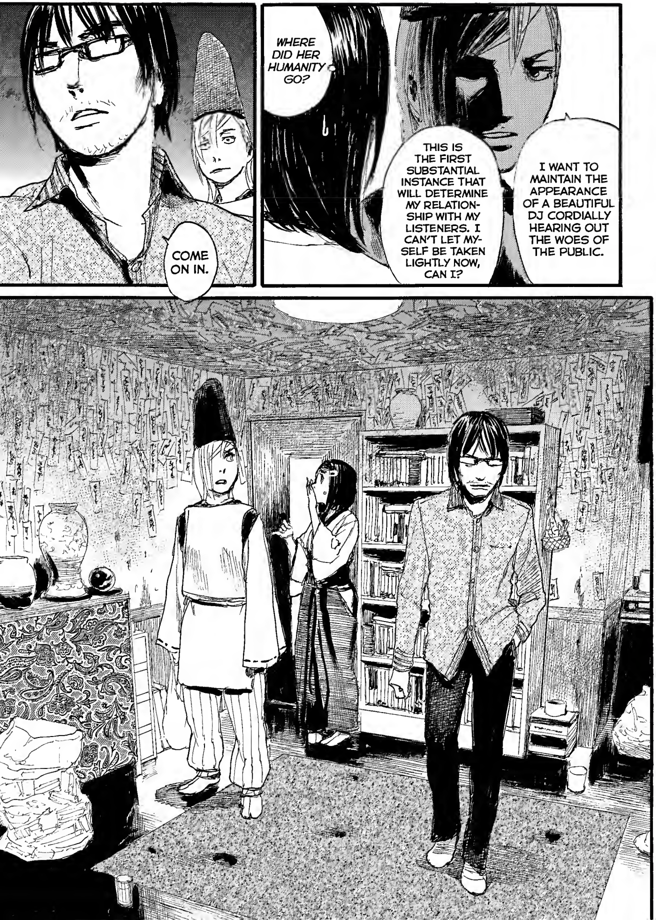
ゴ。
ぴんぽーん DING DONG

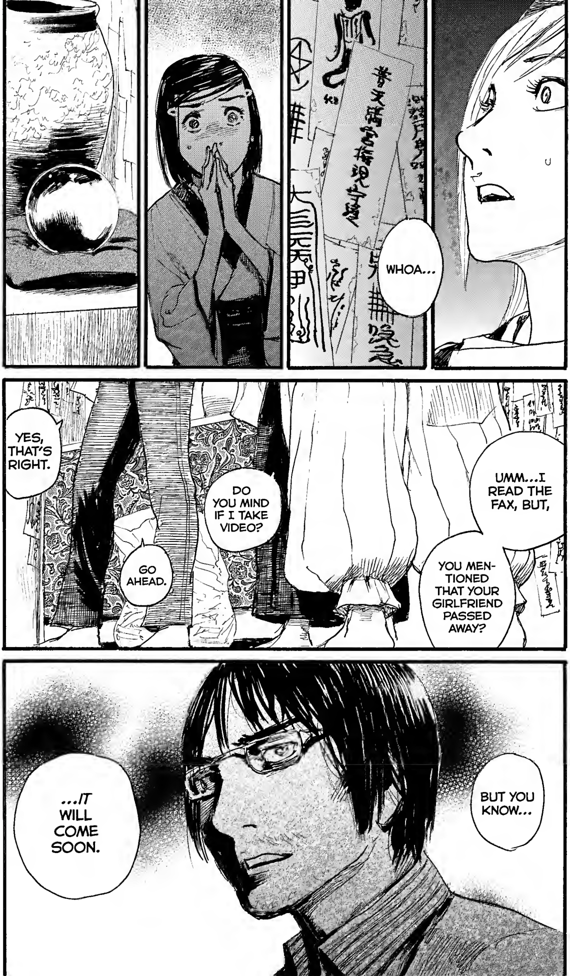

ZTCH
N-NO SOME ONE HEL—
BOOP
ピンポーン
DING DONG
what was that..?
TCH yes?
GOOD EVENING. I'M FROM MOIWAYAMA RADIO. WE SPOKE ON THE PHONE EARLIER.
CLACK
...

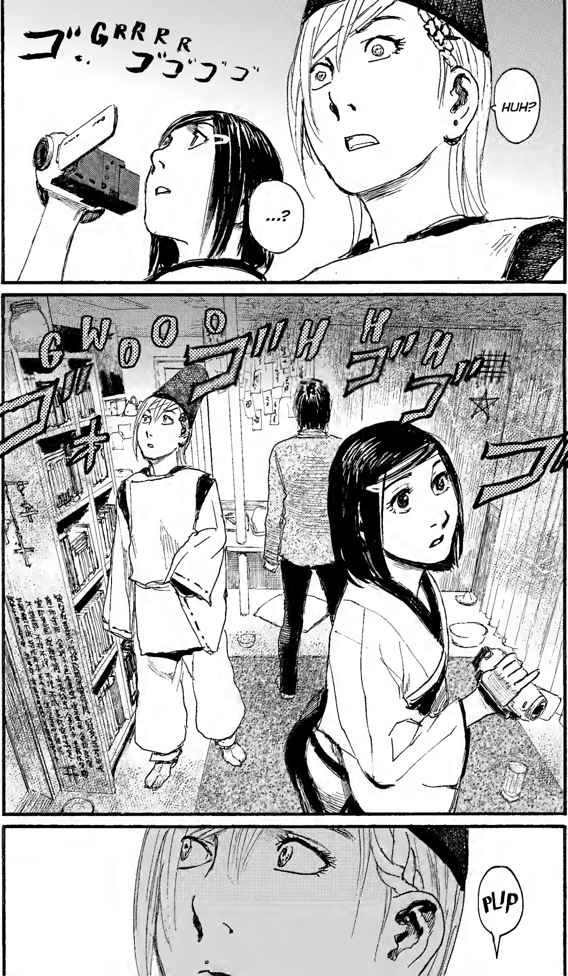

YOU'RE THAT...
POLICE... AND SALMON LADY.
POLICE AND SALMON?
HEYA! WHAT'S IT BEEN, SIX HOURS?
I WAS SENT BY THE RADIO STATION TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR GHOST PROBLEM!
HUH...? HANG ON A SECOND.
SINCE YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOWED UP AFTER I SENT THAT FAX...
...DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE MINARE KODA...
...THE WOMAN FROM THE RADIO?
That reminds me, I think you introduced yourself as such when I called the police.
OKI-SAN...
ARE YOU AWARE OF SOMETHING KNOWN AS KUCHI-KAMIZAKE?

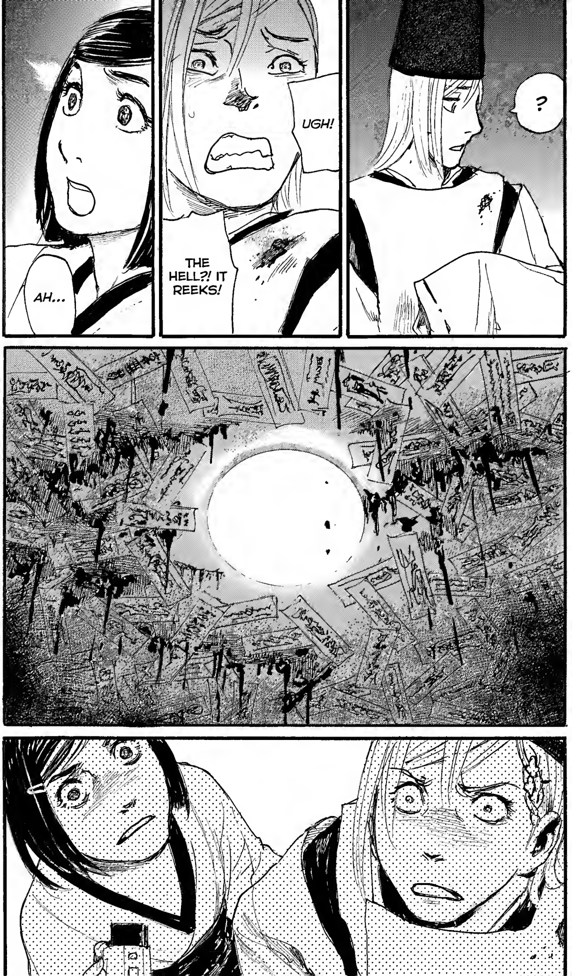

IT'S A VARIETY OF *SAKE* MADE BY CHEWING COOKED GRAINS THOROUGHLY AND COLLECTING THE MASH IN AN EARTHENWARE, WHERE IT IS LEFT TO FERMENT DUE TO THE ENZYMES IN THE SALIVA.
IT HAS BEEN USED IN ANCIENT JAPAN, RYUKYU, AND TAIWAN AS AN ALCOHOL FOR SACRED RITUALS.
WHAT'S INTRIGUING IS THAT THE ONE TASKED WITH MAKING THE *SAKE*...
...WAS ALWAYS A WOMAN, EITHER SHRINE MAIDENS OR VIRGINS.
PALACE of SAVINGS DON QUIJOTE
"RITUAL, *SAKE*, WOMEN," THREE INSEPARABLE COMPONENTS.
THAT BEING SAID, OKI-SAN...
...THOUGH I FEEL IT MAY ONLY SEEM NATURAL AT THIS POINT...
...THE WOMAN WHO WILL RID YOUR HOME OF THE WICKED SPIRIT POSSESSING IT...
...IS NONE OTHER THAN THE DRUNKEN WOMAN YOU FOUND COLLAPSED AT YOUR HOME'S ENTRANCE.

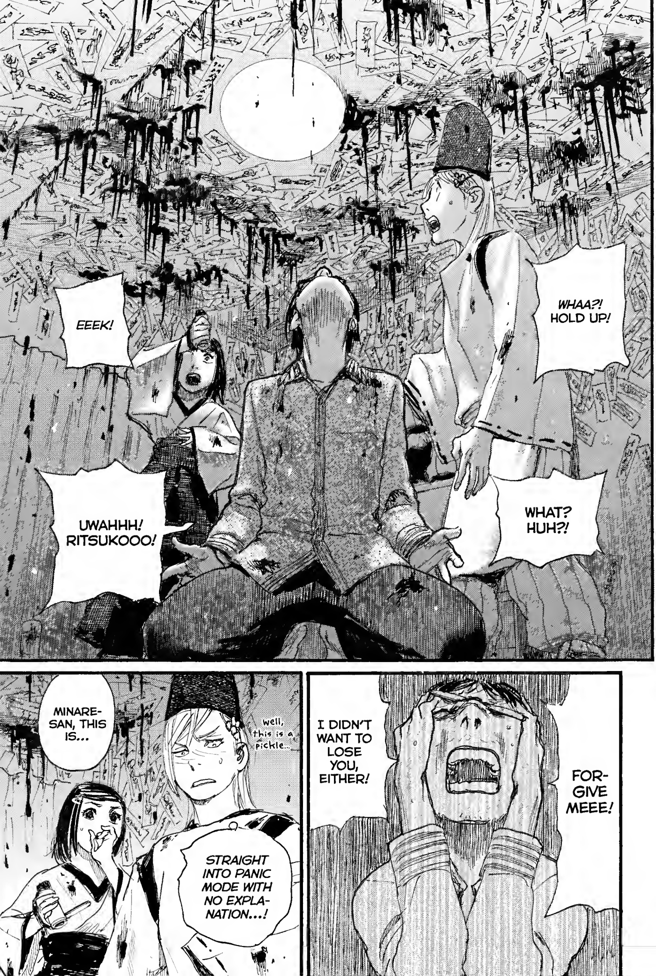

I SEE...
VERY WELL. PLEASE, COME INSIDE.
...
THE FACT THAT HE JUST IGNORED THAT RIDICULOUS, LONG-WINDED EXPLANATION...
IS JUST A TESTAMENT TO THE SCALE AND DEPTH OF HIS DISTRESS.
JEEZ, MINARE-SAN...
HM?
OH, ACTUALLY, I LIVE IN THE ROOM UPSTAIRS ON THE OTHER SIDE.
HUH?!
I THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE THAT YOU DIDN'T HESITATE TO COME HERE.
YOU COULD'VE TOLD ME YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER...
AND I WOULDN'T REALLY SAY WE'RE ACQUAINTED.
HE JUST CARRIED ME TO MY ROOM AFTER I PASSED OUT DRUNK AT THE WRONG DOOR A NUMBER OF TIMES. THAT'S ALL.
THAT'S A PRETTY BIG DEAL!
ALSO, WHAT?! HE SOUNDS LIKE A SUPER GOOD PERSON!
MIZUHO-CHAN.
NO MATTER THE QUALITY OF HIS CHARACTER, HE IS A CIVILIAN, WHILE WE ARE THE MEDIA.

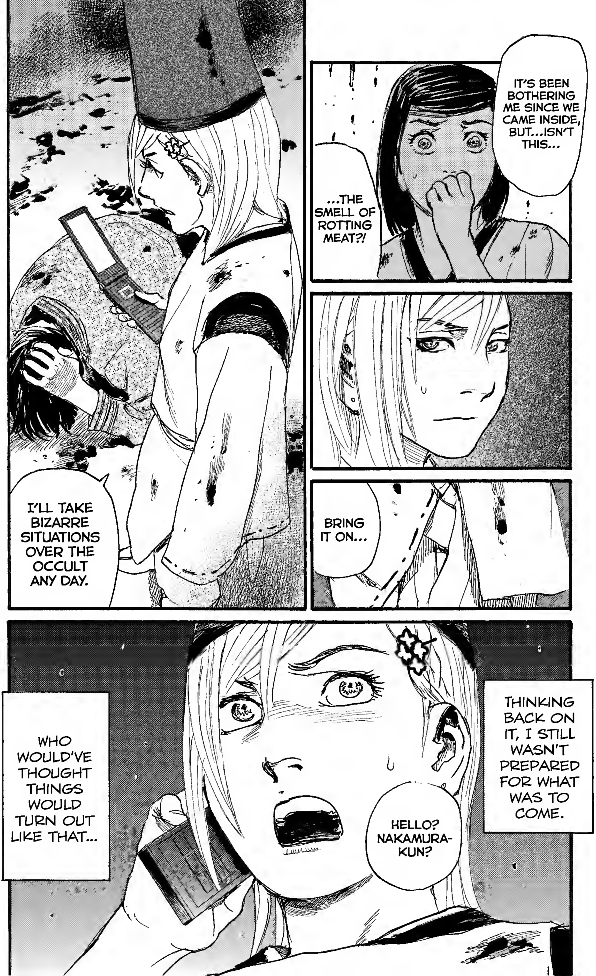

I WANT TO MAINTAIN THE APPEARANCE OF A BEAUTIFUL DJ CORDIALLY HEARING OUT THE WOES OF THE PUBLIC.
THIS IS THE FIRST SUBSTANTIAL INSTANCE THAT WILL DETERMINE MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY LISTENERS. I CAN'T LET MYSELF BE TAKEN LIGHTLY NOW, CAN I?
WHERE DID HER HUMANITY GO?
COME ON IN.


WHOA...
UMM...I READ THE FAX, BUT,
YOU MENTIONED THAT YOUR GIRLFRIEND PASSED AWAY?
YES, THAT'S RIGHT.
DO YOU MIND IF I TAKE VIDEO?
GO AHEAD.
BUT YOU KNOW...
...IT WILL COME SOON.

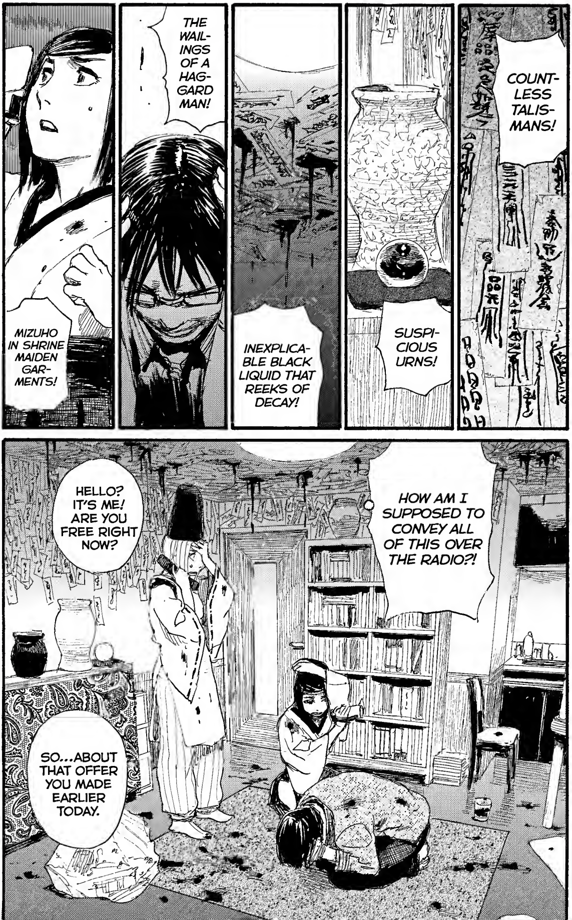

HUH?
...?
ゴ GRRRR ゴゴゴゴ
GWOOOHHH
ゴォ ゴ ゴ ゴ ゴ
PLIP

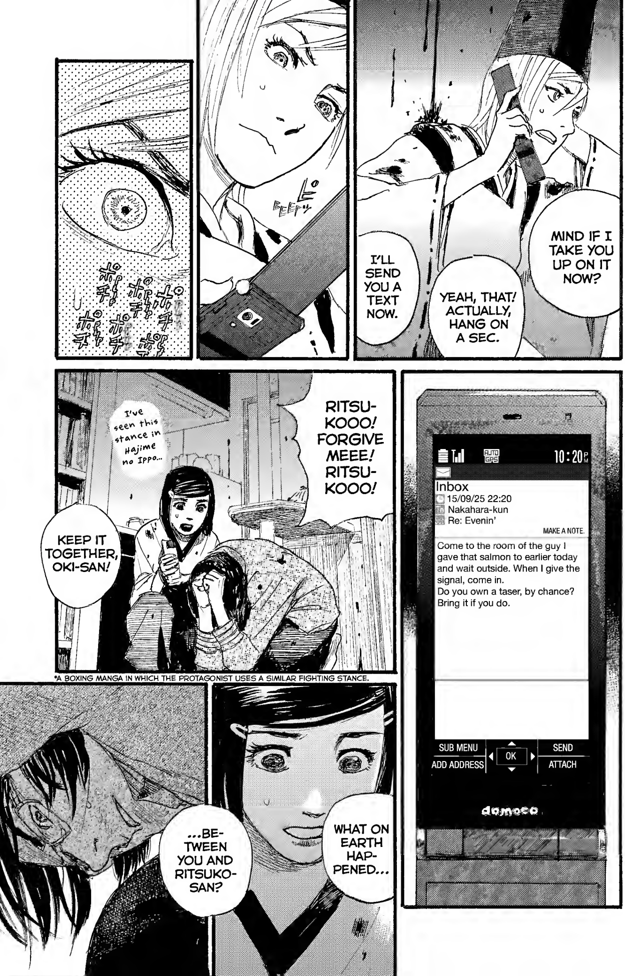

?
UGH!
THE HELL?! IT REEKS!
AH...


WHAA?! HOLD UP!
EEEK!
WHAT? HUH?!
UWAHHH! RITSUKOOO!
FORGIVE MEEE!
I DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE YOU, EITHER!
Well, this is a pickle...
MINARE-SAN, THIS IS...
STRAIGHT INTO PANIC MODE WITH NO EXPLANATION...!


IT'S BEEN BOTHERING ME SINCE WE CAME INSIDE, BUT...ISN'T THIS...
...THE SMELL OF ROTTING MEAT?!
BRING IT ON...
I'LL TAKE BIZARRE SITUATIONS OVER THE OCCULT ANY DAY.
THINKING BACK ON IT, I STILL WASN'T PREPARED FOR WHAT WAS TO COME.
HELLO? NAKAMURA-KUN?
WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT THINGS WOULD TURN OUT LIKE THAT...

Chapter 21 「STEAM IS UNCONCEALABLE.」

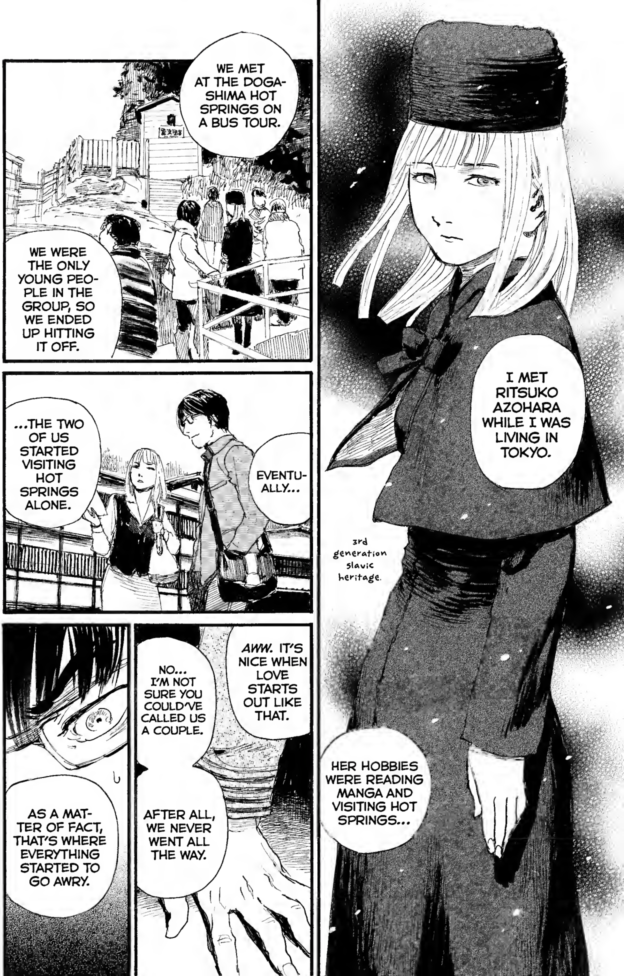

COUNTLESS TALISMANS!
SUSPICIOUS URNS!
INEXPLICABLE BLACK LIQUID THAT REEKS OF DECAY!
THE WAILINGS OF A HAGGARD MAN!
MIZUHO IN SHRINE MAIDEN GARMENTS!
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO CONVEY ALL OF THIS OVER THE RADIO?!
HELLO? IT'S ME! ARE YOU FREE RIGHT NOW?
SO...ABOUT THAT OFFER YOU MADE EARLIER TODAY.

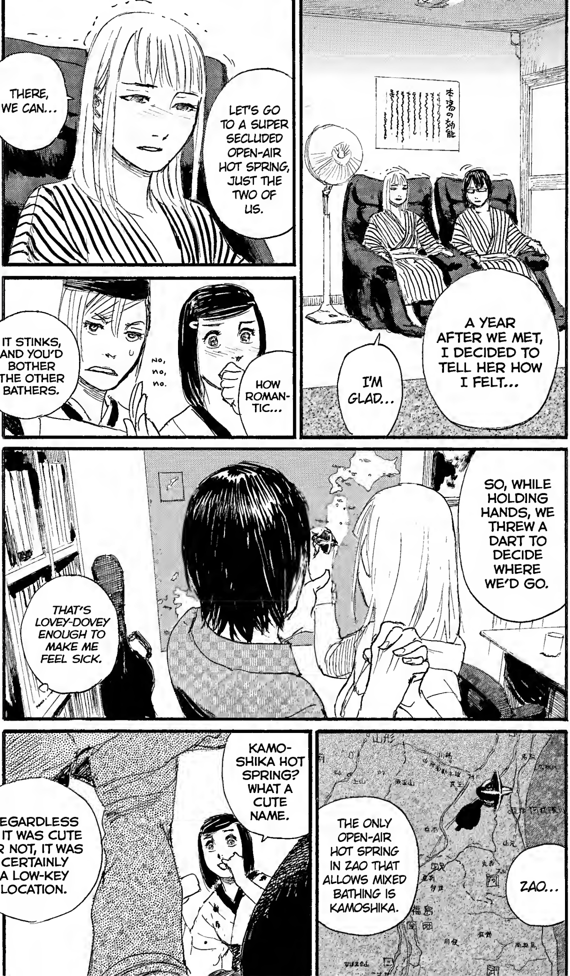

MIND IF I TAKE YOU UP ON IT NOW?
YEAH, THAT! ACTUALLY, HANG ON A SEC.
I'LL SEND YOU A TEXT NOW.
BEEP
ポチ ポチ ポチ ポチ ポチ ポチ
10:20 PM
AUTO GPS
SUB MENU
ADD ADDRESS
OK
SEND
ATTACH
docomo
RITSU-KOOO! FORGIVE MEEE! RITSU-KOOO!
I've seen this stance in Hajime no Ippo...
KEEP IT TOGETHER, OKI-SAN!
WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED...
...BETWEEN YOU AND RITSUKO-SAN?

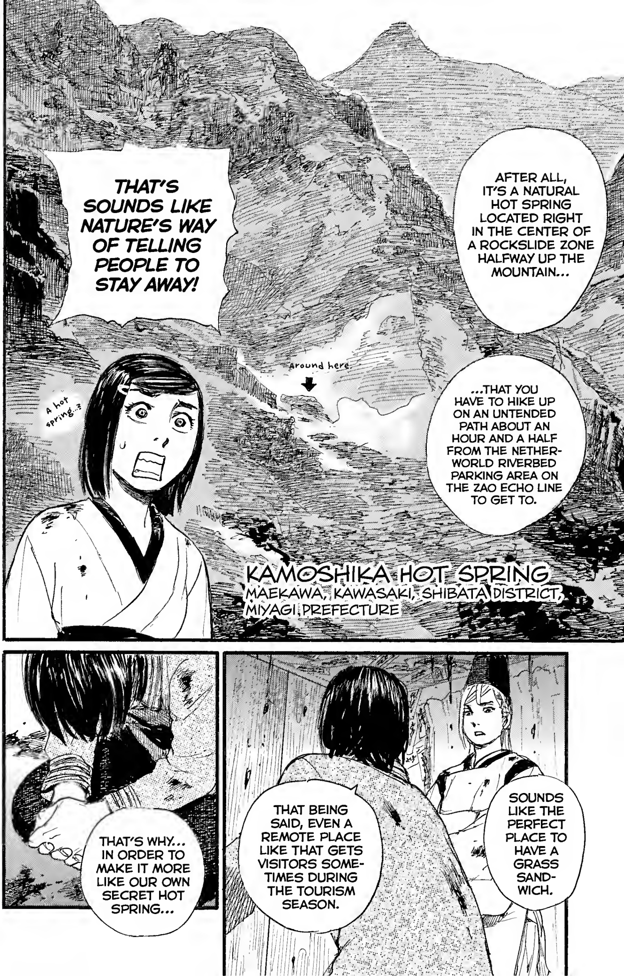
Inbox
15/09/25 22:20
Nakahara-kun
Re: Evenin'
MAKE A NOTE.

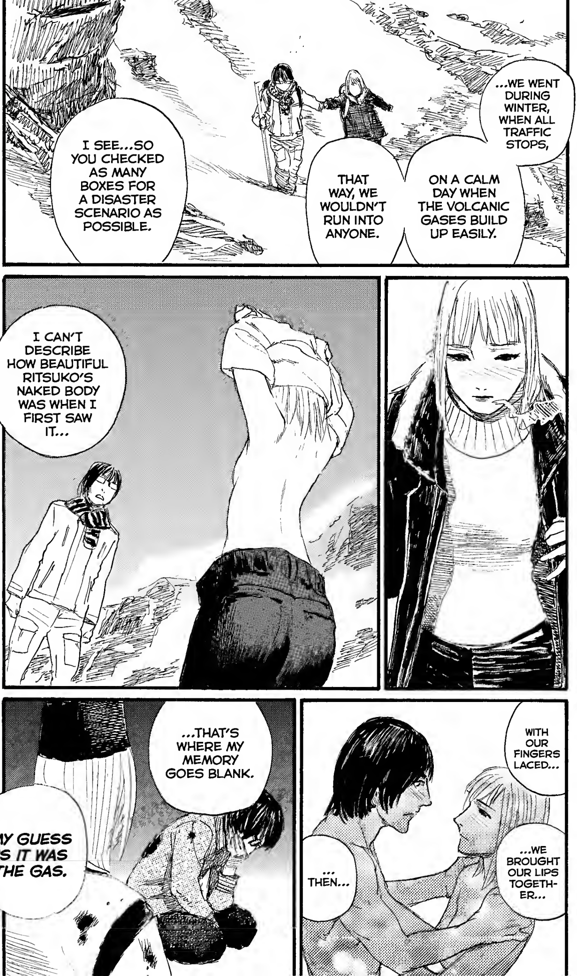
Come to the room of the guy I gave that salmon to earlier today and wait outside. When I give the signal, come in.
Do you own a taser, by chance? Bring it if you do.

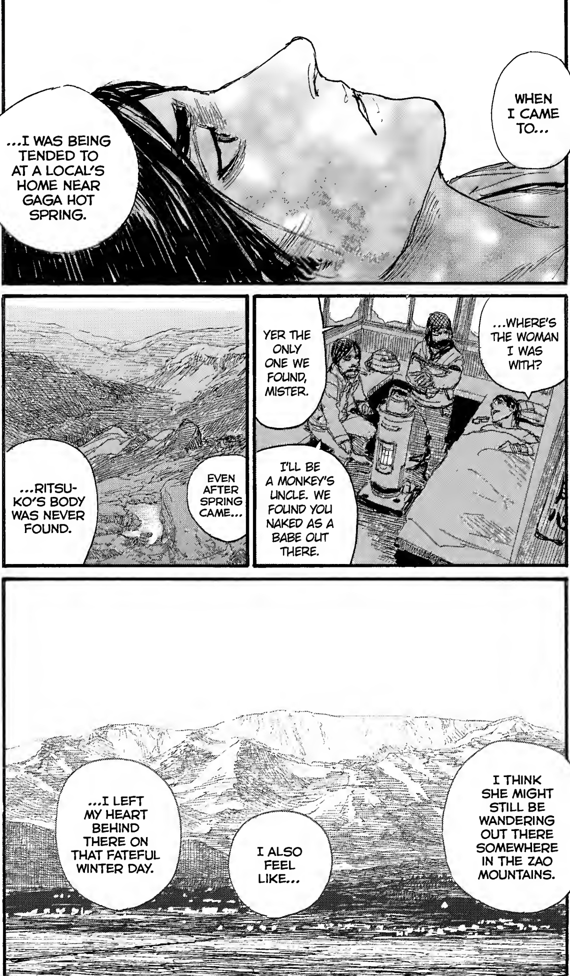
*A BOXING MANGA IN WHICH THE PROTAGONIST USES A SIMILAR FIGHTING STANCE.

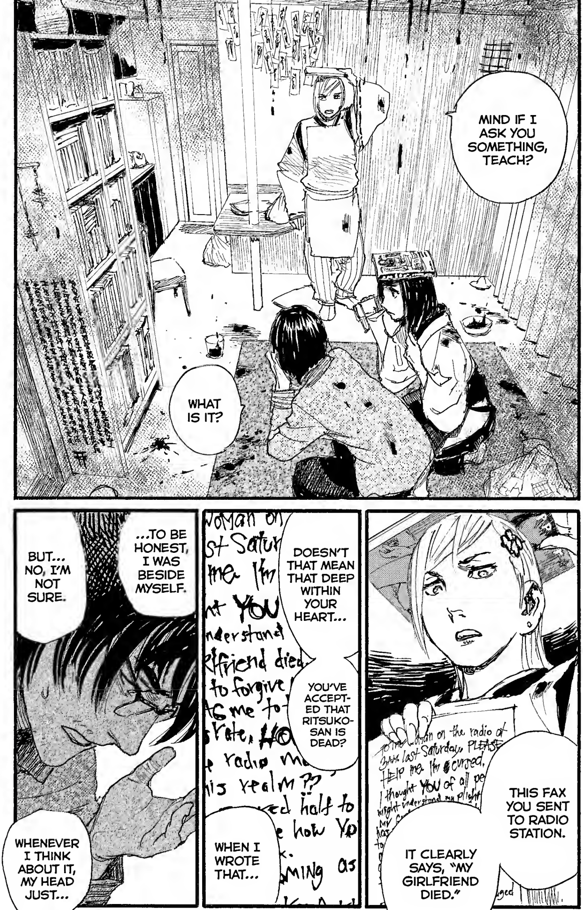

I MET RITSUKO AZOHARA WHILE I WAS LIVING IN TOKYO.
3rd generation slavic heritage.
HER HOBBIES WERE READING MANGA AND VISITING HOT SPRINGS...
WE MET AT THE DOGASHIMA HOT SPRINGS ON A BUS TOUR.
WE WERE THE ONLY YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE GROUP, SO WE ENDED UP HITTING IT OFF.
EVENTUALLY...
...THE TWO OF US STARTED VISITING HOT SPRINGS ALONE.
AWW. IT'S NICE WHEN LOVE STARTS OUT LIKE THAT.
NO... I'M NOT SURE YOU COULD'VE CALLED US A COUPLE.
AFTER ALL, WE NEVER WENT ALL THE WAY.
AS A MATTER OF FACT, THAT'S WHERE EVERYTHING STARTED TO GO AWRY.

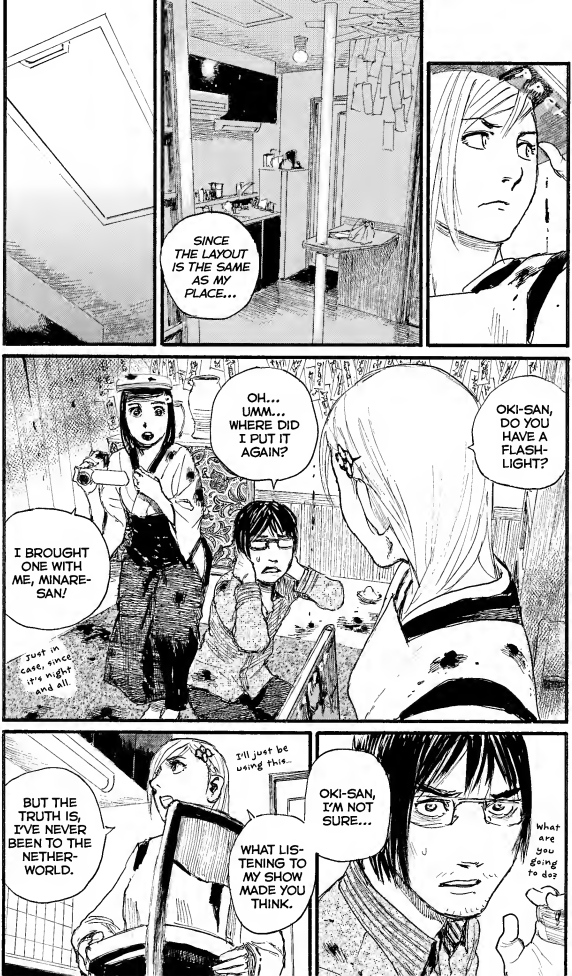

A YEAR AFTER WE MET, I DECIDED TO TELL HER HOW I FELT...
I'M GLAD...
LET'S GO TO A SUPER SECLUDED OPEN-AIR HOT SPRING, JUST THE TWO OF US.
THERE, WE CAN...
HOW ROMANTIC...
No, no, no.
IT STINKS, AND YOU'D BOTHER THE OTHER BATHERS.
SO, WHILE HOLDING HANDS, WE THREW A DART TO DECIDE WHERE WE'D GO.
THAT'S LOVEY-DOVEY ENOUGH TO MAKE ME FEEL SICK.
山形
福島
ZAO...
THE ONLY OPEN-AIR HOT SPRING IN ZAO THAT ALLOWS MIXED BATHING IS KAMOSHIKA.
KAMOSHIKA HOT SPRING? WHAT A CUTE NAME.
REGARDLESS IF IT WAS CUTE OR NOT, IT WAS CERTAINLY A LOW-KEY LOCATION.

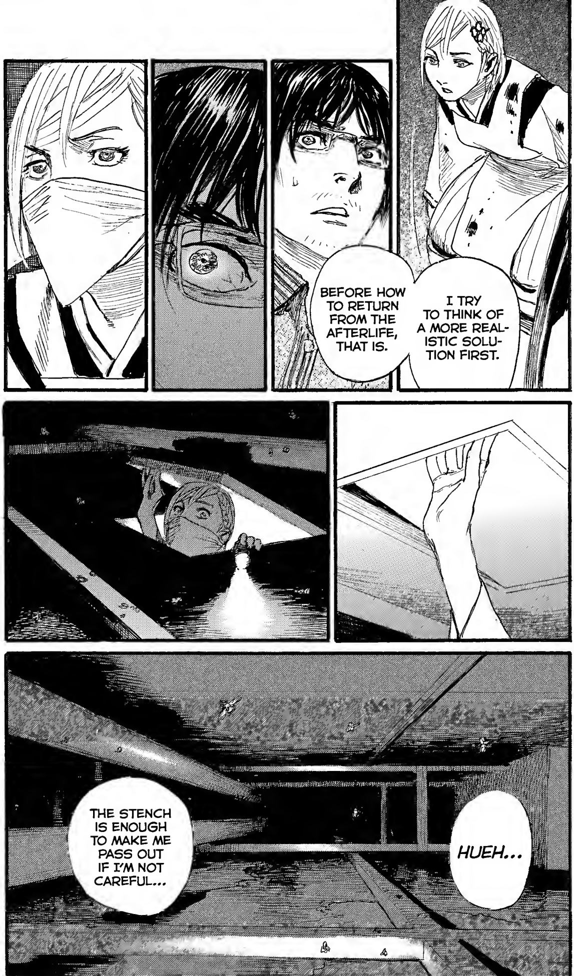

AFTER ALL, IT'S A NATURAL HOT SPRING LOCATED RIGHT IN THE CENTER OF A ROCKSLIDE ZONE HALFWAY UP THE MOUNTAIN...
...THAT YOU HAVE TO HIKE UP ON AN UNTENDED PATH ABOUT AN HOUR AND A HALF FROM THE NETHER-WORLD RIVERBED PARKING AREA ON THE ZAO ECHO LINE TO GET TO.
Around here.
A hot spring..?
THAT'S SOUNDS LIKE NATURE'S WAY OF TELLING PEOPLE TO STAY AWAY!
KAMOSHIKA HOT SPRING
MAEKAWA, KAWASAKI, SHIBATA DISTRICT, MIYAGI PREFECTURE
SOUNDS LIKE THE PERFECT PLACE TO HAVE A GRASS SANDWICH.
THAT BEING SAID, EVEN A REMOTE PLACE LIKE THAT GETS VISITORS SOMETIMES DURING THE TOURISM SEASON.
THAT'S WHY... IN ORDER TO MAKE IT MORE LIKE OUR OWN SECRET HOT SPRING...

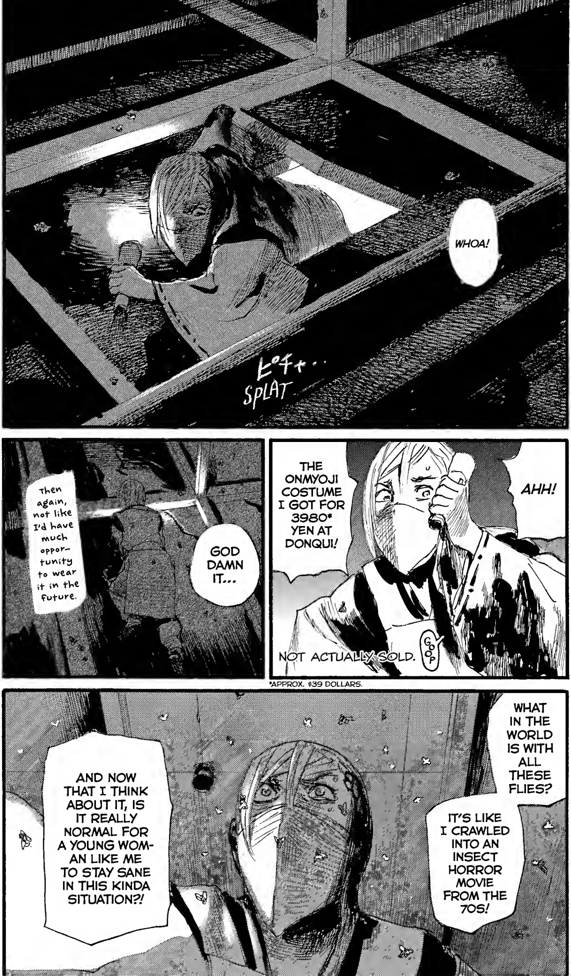

...WE WENT DURING WINTER, WHEN ALL TRAFFIC STOPS,
ON A CALM DAY WHEN THE VOLCANIC GASES BUILD UP EASILY.
THAT WAY, WE WOULDN'T RUN INTO ANYONE.
I SEE...SO YOU CHECKED AS MANY BOXES FOR A DISASTER SCENARIO AS POSSIBLE.
I CAN'T DESCRIBE HOW BEAUTIFUL RITSUKO'S NAKED BODY WAS WHEN I FIRST SAW IT...
WITH OUR FINGERS LACED...
...WE BROUGHT OUR LIPS TOGETHER...
...THEN...
...THAT'S WHERE MY MEMORY GOES BLANK.
MY GUESS IS IT WAS THE GAS.


WHEN I CAME TO...
...I WAS BEING TENDED TO AT A LOCAL'S HOME NEAR GAGA HOT SPRING.
...WHERE'S THE WOMAN I WAS WITH?
YER THE ONLY ONE WE FOUND, MISTER.
I'LL BE A MONKEY'S UNCLE. WE FOUND YOU NAKED AS A BABE OUT THERE.
EVEN AFTER SPRING CAME...
...RITSUKO'S BODY WAS NEVER FOUND.
I THINK SHE MIGHT STILL BE WANDERING OUT THERE SOMEWHERE IN THE ZAO MOUNTAINS.
I ALSO FEEL LIKE...
...I LEFT MY HEART BEHIND THERE ON THAT FATEFUL WINTER DAY.

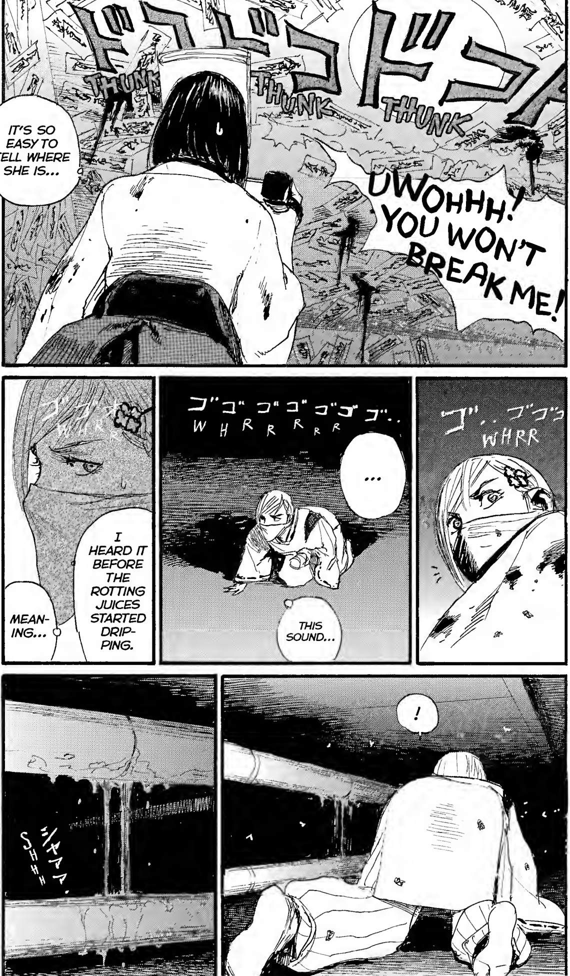

MIND IF I ASK YOU SOMETHING, TEACH?
WHAT IS IT?
To the woman on the radio of 3AM last Saturday, PLEASE HELP me. I'm cursed. I thought YOU of all pe might understand my plight
THIS FAX YOU SENT TO RADIO STATION.
IT CLEARLY SAYS, "MY GIRLFRIEND DIED."
DOESN'T THAT MEAN THAT DEEP WITHIN YOUR HEART...
YOU'VE ACCEPTED THAT RITSUKO-SAN IS DEAD?
WHEN I WROTE THAT...
...TO BE HONEST, I WAS BESIDE MYSELF.
BUT... NO, I'M NOT SURE.
WHENEVER I THINK ABOUT IT, MY HEAD JUST...

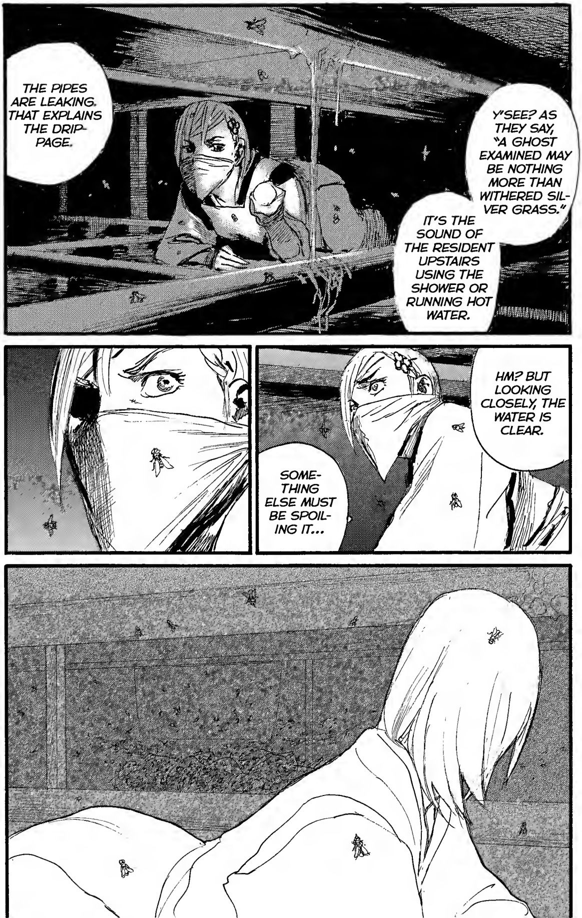

SINCE THE LAYOUT IS THE SAME AS MY PLACE...
OKI-SAN, DO YOU HAVE A FLASHLIGHT?
OH... UMM... WHERE DID I PUT IT AGAIN?
I BROUGHT ONE WITH ME, MINARE-SAN!
Just in case, since it's night and all.
What are you going to do?
I'll just be using this...
OKI-SAN, I'M NOT SURE...
WHAT LISTENING TO MY SHOW MADE YOU THINK.
BUT THE TRUTH IS, I'VE NEVER BEEN TO THE NETHERWORLD.

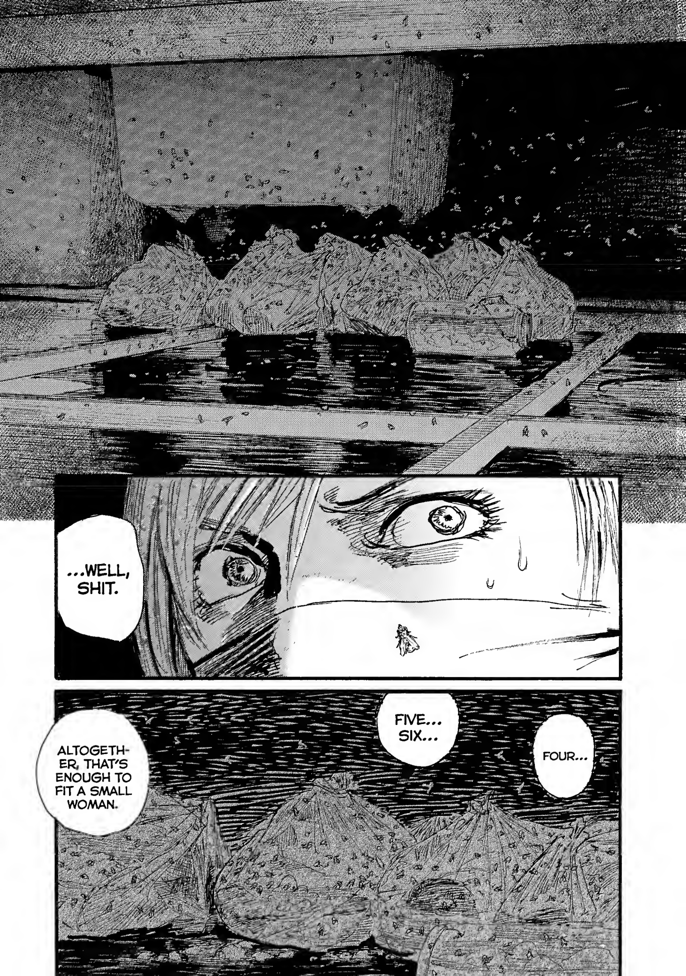

I TRY TO THINK OF A MORE REALISTIC SOLUTION FIRST.
BEFORE HOW TO RETURN FROM THE AFTERLIFE, THAT IS.
HUEH...
THE STENCH IS ENOUGH TO MAKE ME PASS OUT IF I'M NOT CAREFUL...

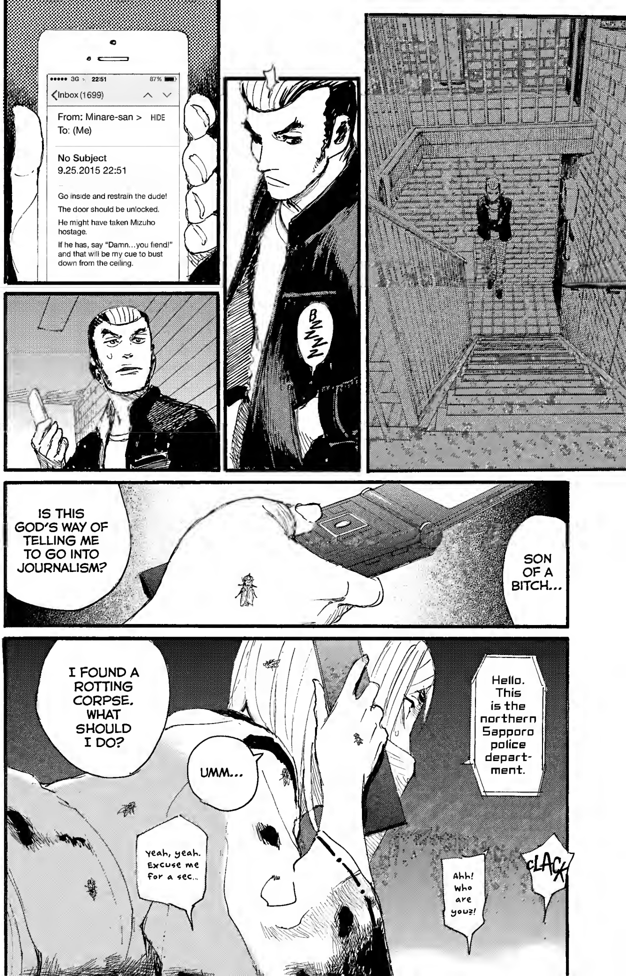

WHOA!
ピチャ..
SPLAT
AHH!
THE ONMYOJI COSTUME I GOT FOR 3980* YEN AT DONQUI!
GOOP
NOT ACTUALLY SOLD.
GOD DAMN IT...
Then again, not like I'd have much opportunity to wear it in the future.
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS WITH ALL THESE FLIES?
IT'S LIKE I CRAWLED INTO AN INSECT HORROR MOVIE FROM THE 70S!
AND NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, IS IT REALLY NORMAL FOR A YOUNG WOMAN LIKE ME TO STAY SANE IN THIS KINDA SITUATION?!

*APPROX. $39 DOLLARS.


ドコドコドコ
THUNK THUNK THUNK
UWOHHH! YOU WON'T BREAK ME!
IT'S SO EASY TO TELL WHERE SHE IS...
ゴ..ゴゴ
WHRR
ゴゴゴゴゴゴゴ..
WHRRRRR
...
THIS SOUND...
ゴゴォ
WHRR
I HEARD IT BEFORE THE ROTTING JUICES STARTED DRIPPING.
MEANING...
!
シャアア
SHHH


Y'SEE? AS THEY SAY, "A GHOST EXAMINED MAY BE NOTHING MORE THAN WITHERED SILVER GRASS."
IT'S THE SOUND OF THE RESIDENT UPSTAIRS USING THE SHOWER OR RUNNING HOT WATER.
THE PIPES ARE LEAKING. THAT EXPLAINS THE DRIPPAGE.
HM? BUT LOOKING CLOSELY, THE WATER IS CLEAR.
SOMETHING ELSE MUST BE SPOILING IT...


...WELL, SHIT.
FOUR...
FIVE... SIX...
ALTOGETHER, THAT'S ENOUGH TO FIT A SMALL WOMAN.



●●●●● 3G 22:51 87%
Inbox (1699)

From: Minare-san > HIDE
To: (Me)

No Subject
9.25.2015 22:51

Go inside and restrain the dude!

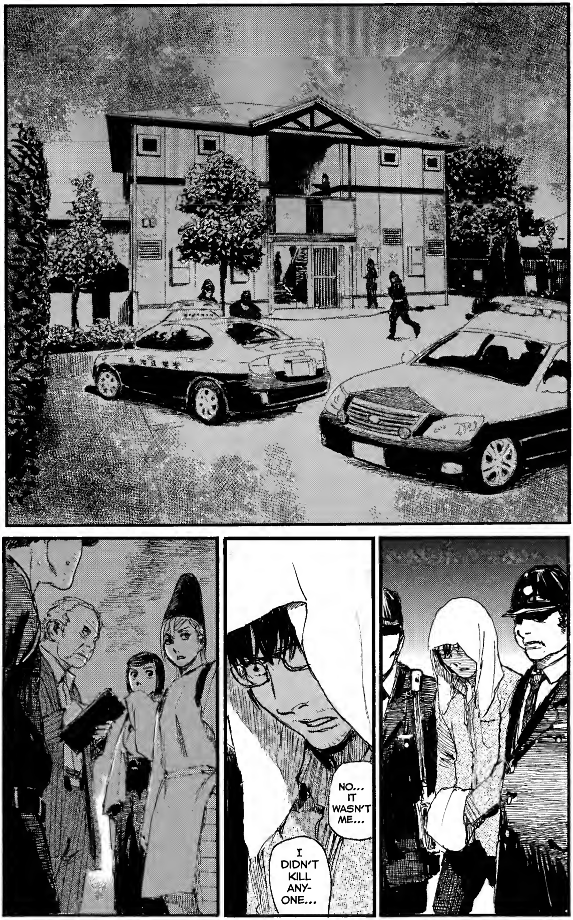
The door should be unlocked.

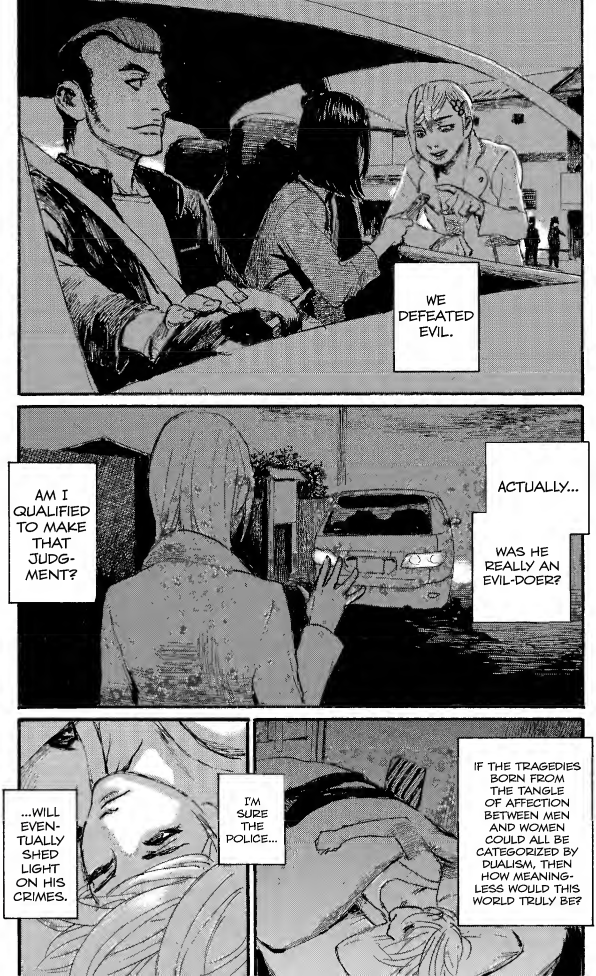
He might have taken Mizuho hostage.

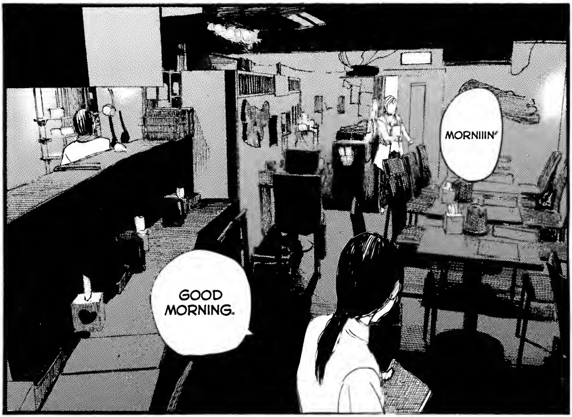
If he has, say "Damn…you fiend!" and that will be my cue to bust down from the ceiling.

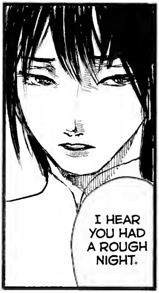
BZZZ
SON OF A BITCH…
IS THIS GOD'S WAY OF TELLING ME TO GO INTO JOURNALISM?
Hello. This is the northern Sapporo police department.
I FOUND A ROTTING CORPSE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?
UMM…
CLACK
Ahh! Who are you?!
Yeah, yeah. Excuse me for a sec…

Chapter 22 「I WANT TO CRY」


NO... IT WASN'T ME...
I DIDN'T KILL ANYONE...

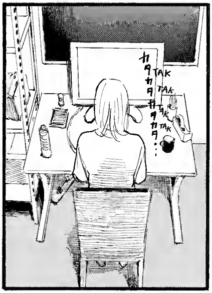

WE DEFEATED EVIL.
ACTUALLY...
WAS HE REALLY AN EVIL-DOER?
AM I QUALIFIED TO MAKE THAT JUDGMENT?
IF THE TRAGEDIES BORN FROM THE TANGLE OF AFFECTION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN COULD ALL BE CATEGORIZED BY DUALISM, THEN HOW MEANINGLESS WOULD THIS WORLD TRULY BE?
I'M SURE THE POLICE...
...WILL EVENTUALLY SHED LIGHT ON HIS CRIMES.

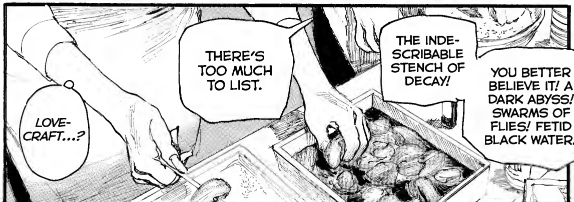

GOOD MORNING.
MORNIIIN'

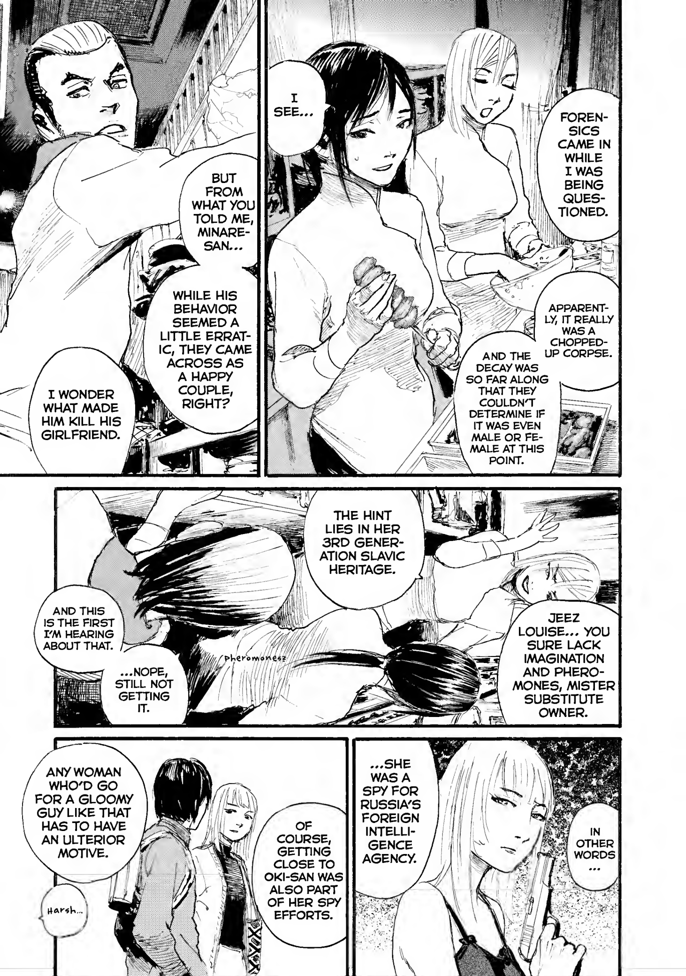

I HEAR YOU HAD A ROUGH NIGHT.

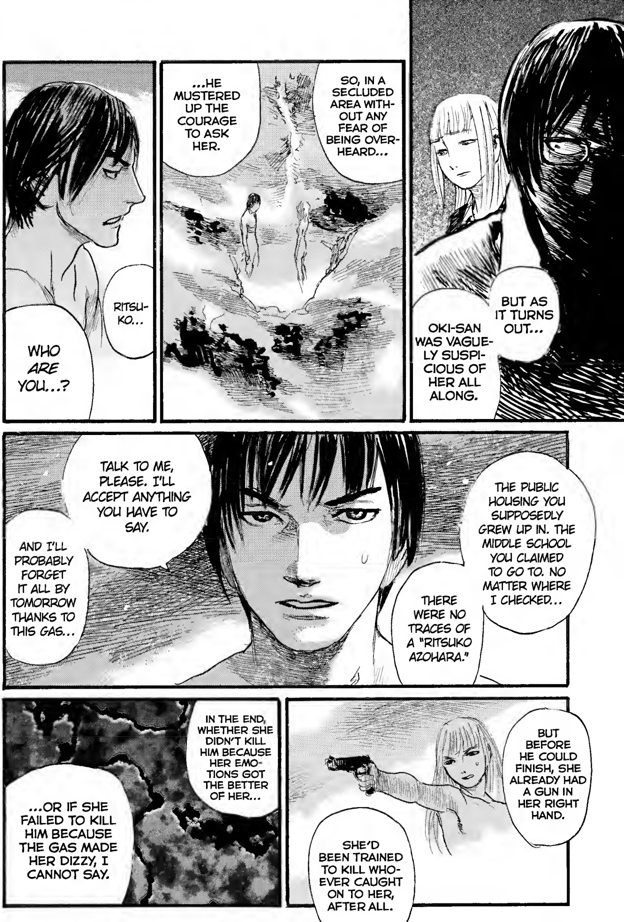
How is everyone taking advantage of this fine fall day?
For reasons I won't mention, I watched the uncensored version of In the ***Realm of the Senses*** last night, and after writhing about in anguish for about an hour, I found myself pondering in the wake of the love-hate tragedy. I recall reading a quote by Sada Abe that goes something like, ***"I am positive that there are other women in the world who have thought about doing what I've done. They simply don't act on it."*** I think I finally understand what she meant by that. For example, if I were in someone like Sada's or Medea's shoes, the fact that I can't deny the possibility that I might kill out of love for a man or my children irritates me to no end. Despite having been on this planet for over 250,000 years, I find it surprising that mankind has yet to reach the agape which goes beyond simple familial and romantic love, and when I think about what might be responsible for this stagnation, the only thing I can come up with is western capitalism.

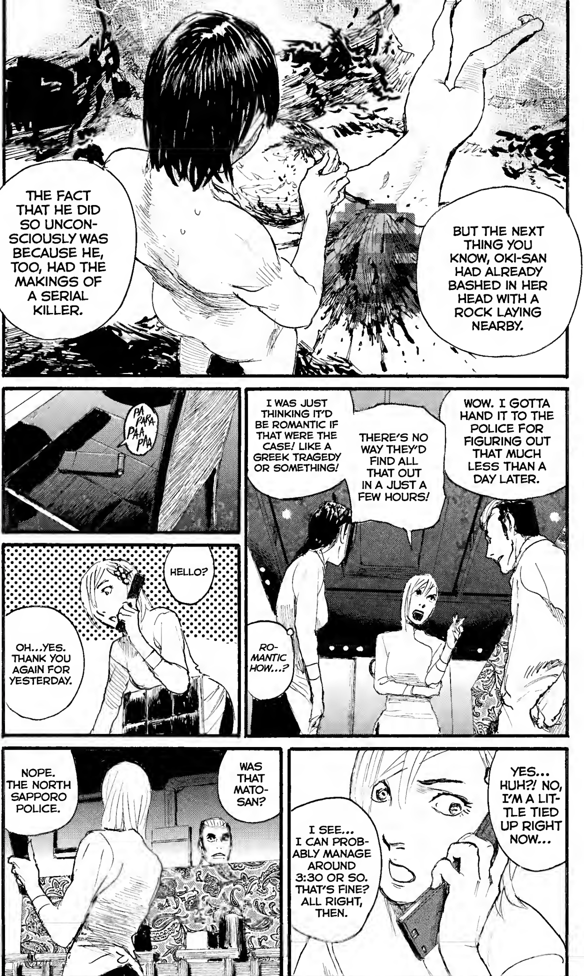
As for the bread of the day, we have the Danish trekornbrød, as well as the Middle East's ***pita bread.***
Trekornbrød uses a dough of whole wheat, rye, and black sesame, which is then topped with white sesame seeds to make for an overall

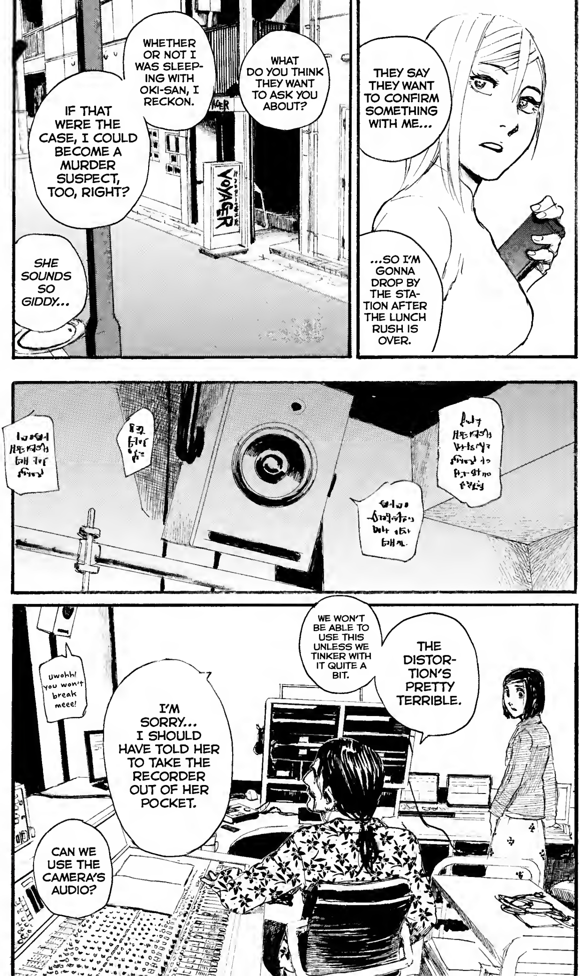

カタ TAK
カタ TAK
カタ TAK
カタ TAK
カタ...

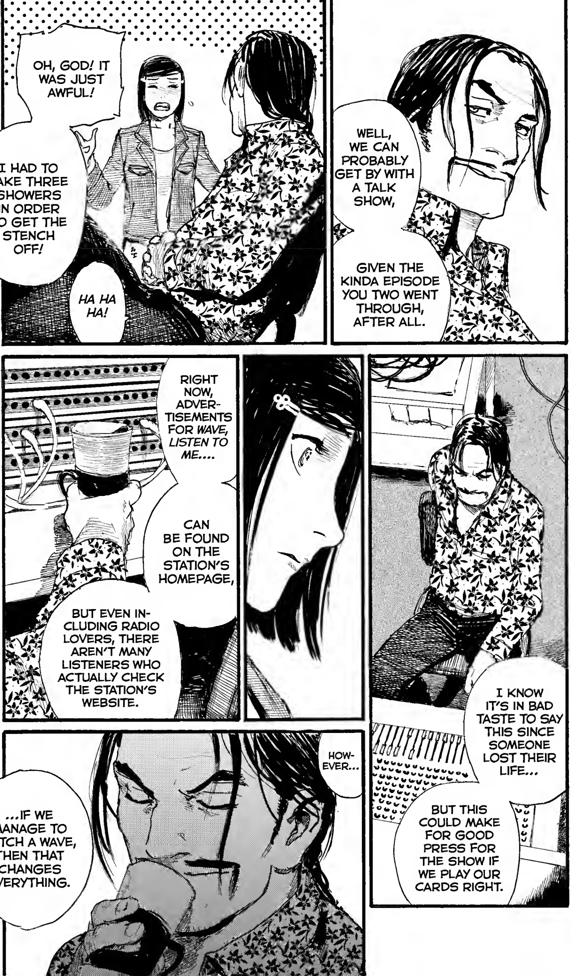

THERE'S TOO MUCH TO LIST.
THE INDESCRIBABLE STENCH OF DECAY!
YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT! A DARK ABYSS! SWARMS OF FLIES! FETID BLACK WATER!
LOVECRAFT...?

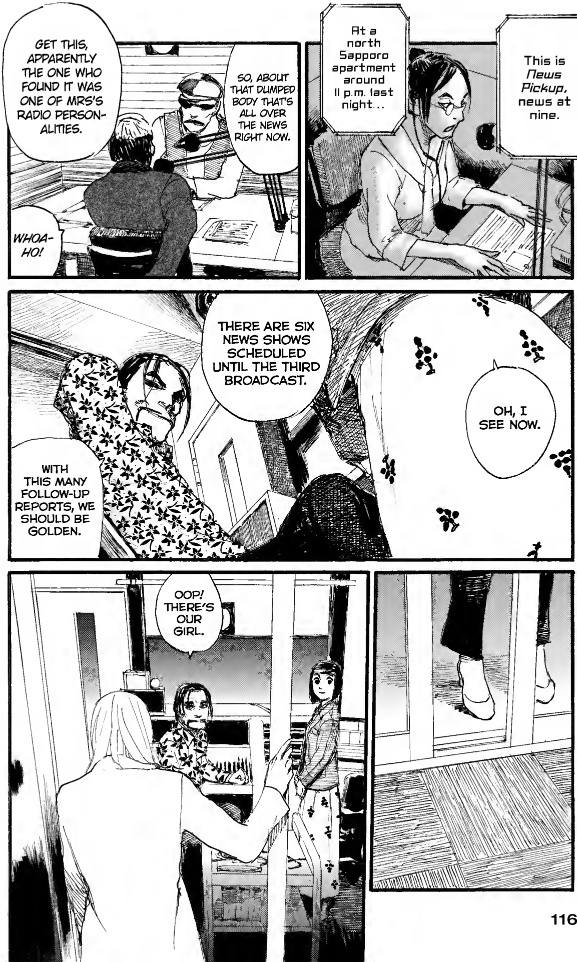

FORENSICS CAME IN WHILE I WAS BEING QUESTIONED.
I SEE...
APPARENTLY, IT REALLY WAS A CHOPPED-UP CORPSE.
AND THE DECAY WAS SO FAR ALONG THAT THEY COULDN'T DETERMINE IF IT WAS EVEN MALE OR FEMALE AT THIS POINT.
BUT FROM WHAT YOU TOLD ME, MINARE-SAN...
WHILE HIS BEHAVIOR SEEMED A LITTLE ERRATIC, THEY CAME ACROSS AS A HAPPY COUPLE, RIGHT?
I WONDER WHAT MADE HIM KILL HIS GIRLFRIEND.
THE HINT LIES IN HER 3RD GENERATION SLAVIC HERITAGE.
AND THIS IS THE FIRST I'M HEARING ABOUT THAT.
JEEZ LOUISE... YOU SURE LACK IMAGINATION AND PHEROMONES, MISTER SUBSTITUTE OWNER.
pheromones?
...NOPE, STILL NOT GETTING IT.
IN OTHER WORDS...
...SHE WAS A SPY FOR RUSSIA'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.
OF COURSE, GETTING CLOSE TO OKI-SAN WAS ALSO PART OF HER SPY EFFORTS.
ANY WOMAN WHO'D GO FOR A GLOOMY GUY LIKE THAT HAS TO HAVE AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE.
Harsh...

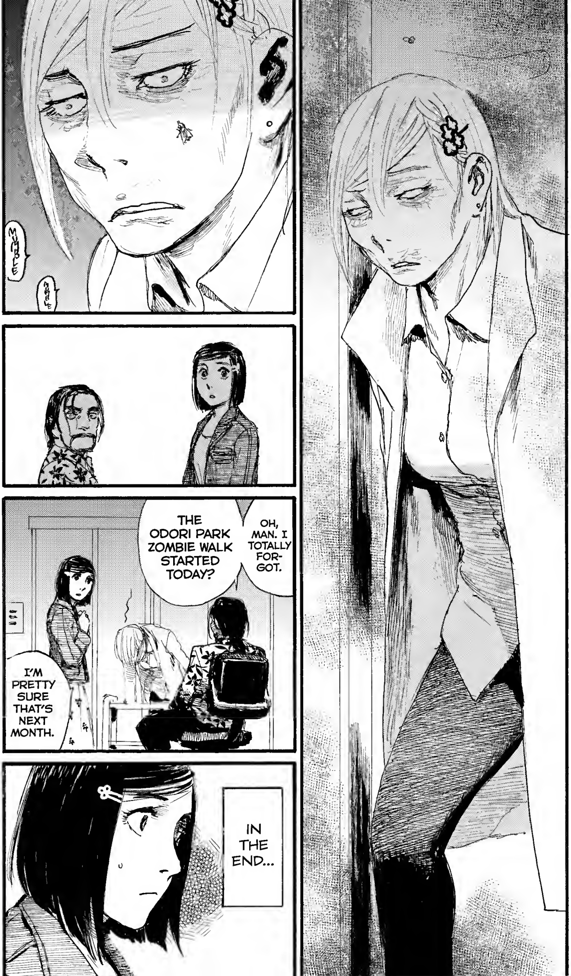

BUT AS IT TURNS OUT...
OKI-SAN WAS VAGUELY SUSPICIOUS OF HER ALL ALONG.
SO, IN A SECLUDED AREA WITHOUT ANY FEAR OF BEING OVERHEARD...
...HE MUSTERED UP THE COURAGE TO ASK HER.
RITSUKO...
WHO *ARE* YOU...?
THE PUBLIC HOUSING YOU SUPPOSEDLY GREW UP IN. THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YOU CLAIMED TO GO TO. NO MATTER WHERE I CHECKED...
THERE WERE NO TRACES OF A "RITSUKO AZOHARA."
TALK TO ME, PLEASE. I'LL ACCEPT ANYTHING YOU HAVE TO SAY.
AND I'LL PROBABLY FORGET IT ALL BY TOMORROW THANKS TO THIS GAS...
BUT BEFORE HE COULD FINISH, SHE ALREADY HAD A GUN IN HER RIGHT HAND.
SHE'D BEEN TRAINED TO KILL WHOEVER CAUGHT ON TO HER, AFTER ALL.
IN THE END, WHETHER SHE DIDN'T KILL HIM BECAUSE HER EMOTIONS GOT THE BETTER OF HER...
...OR IF SHE FAILED TO KILL HIM BECAUSE THE GAS MADE HER DIZZY, I CANNOT SAY.

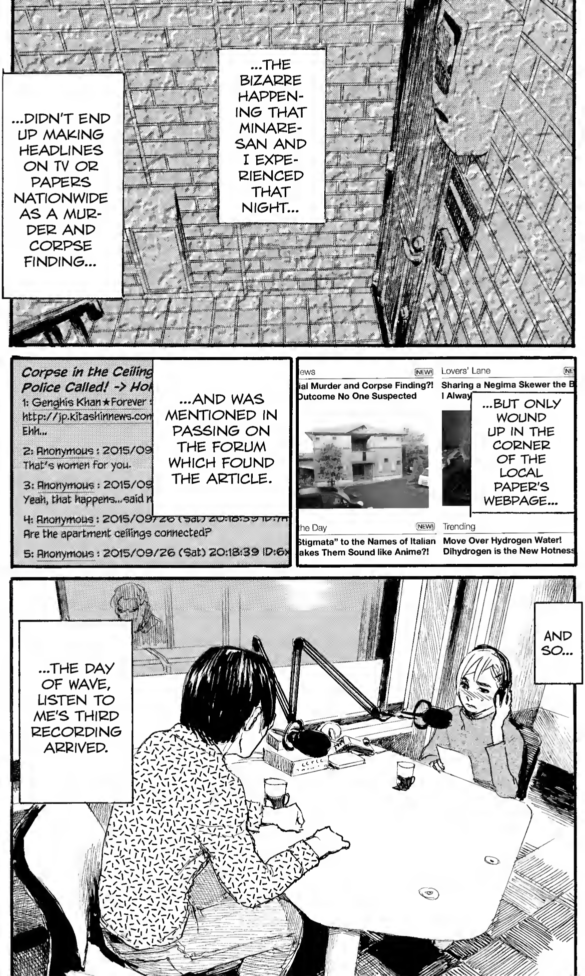

BUT THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW, OKI-SAN HAD ALREADY BASHED IN HER HEAD WITH A ROCK LAYING NEARBY.
THE FACT THAT HE DID SO UNCONSCIOUSLY WAS BECAUSE HE, TOO, HAD THE MAKINGS OF A SERIAL KILLER.
WOW. I GOTTA HAND IT TO THE POLICE FOR FIGURING OUT THAT MUCH LESS THAN A DAY LATER.
THERE'S NO WAY THEY'D FIND ALL THAT OUT IN A JUST A FEW HOURS!
I WAS JUST THINKING IT'D BE ROMANTIC IF THAT WERE THE CASE! LIKE A GREEK TRAGEDY OR SOMETHING!
ROMANTIC HOW...?
PA PARA PAA PAA
HELLO?
OH...YES. THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YESTERDAY.
YES... HUH?! NO, I'M A LITTLE TIED UP RIGHT NOW...
I SEE... I CAN PROBABLY MANAGE AROUND 3:30 OR SO. THAT'S FINE? ALL RIGHT, THEN.
WAS THAT MATO-SAN?
NOPE. THE NORTH SAPPORO POLICE.

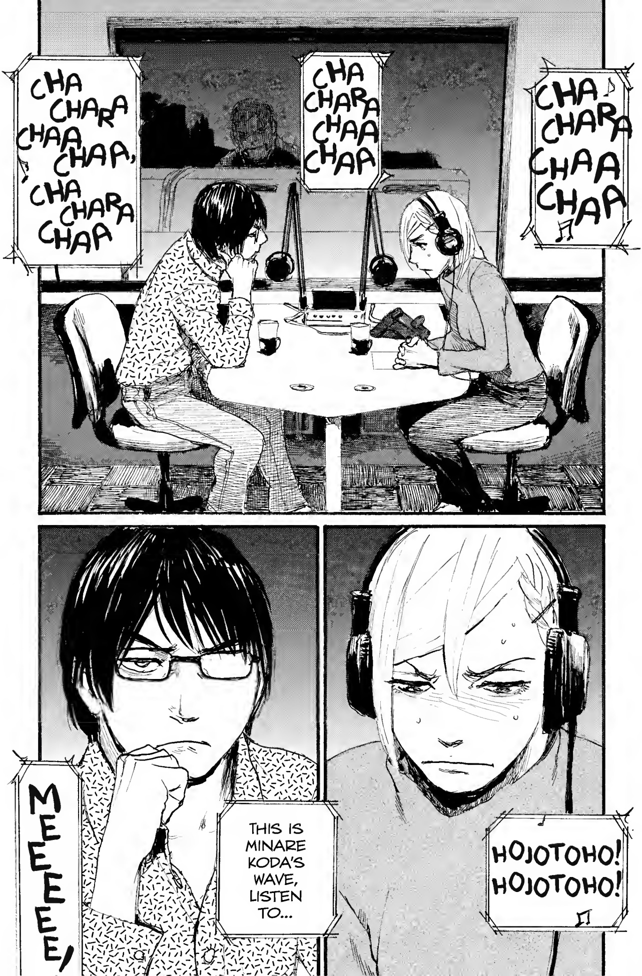

THEY SAY THEY WANT TO CONFIRM SOMETHING WITH ME...
...SO I'M GONNA DROP BY THE STATION AFTER THE LUNCH RUSH IS OVER.
WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY WANT TO ASK YOU ABOUT?
WHETHER OR NOT I WAS SLEEPING WITH OKI-SAN, I RECKON.
IF THAT WERE THE CASE, I COULD BECOME A MURDER SUSPECT, TOO, RIGHT?
VOYAGER
SHE SOUNDS SO GIDDY...
THE DISTORTION'S PRETTY TERRIBLE.
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO USE THIS UNLESS WE TINKER WITH IT QUITE A BIT.
I'M SORRY... I SHOULD HAVE TOLD HER TO TAKE THE RECORDER OUT OF HER POCKET.
Uwohh! You won't break meee!
CAN WE USE THE CAMERA'S AUDIO?

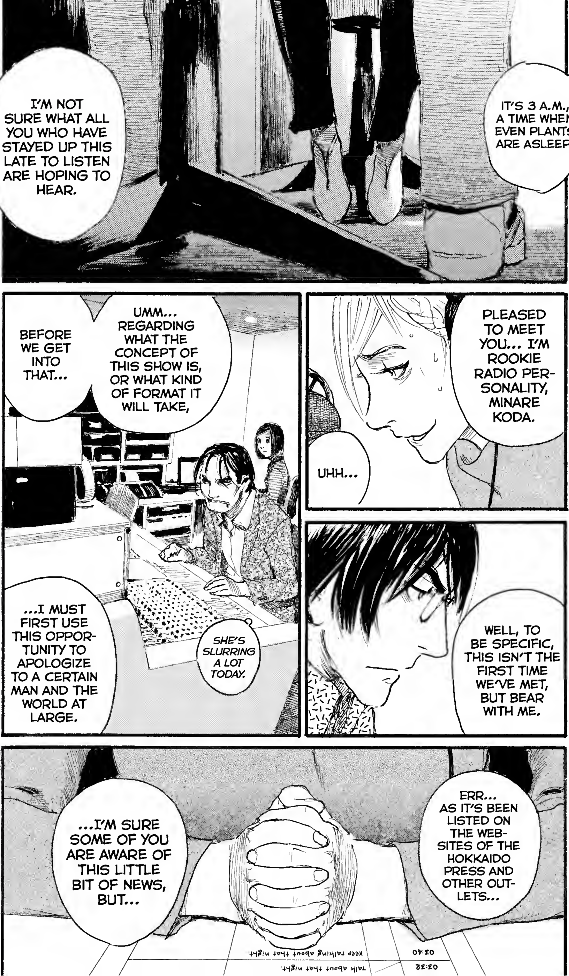

OH, GOD! IT WAS JUST AWFUL!
I HAD TO TAKE THREE SHOWERS IN ORDER TO GET THE STENCH OFF!
HA HA HA!
WELL, WE CAN PROBABLY GET BY WITH A TALK SHOW,
GIVEN THE KINDA EPISODE YOU TWO WENT THROUGH, AFTER ALL.
RIGHT NOW, ADVERTISEMENTS FOR *WAVE, LISTEN TO ME....*
CAN BE FOUND ON THE STATION'S HOMEPAGE,
BUT EVEN INCLUDING RADIO LOVERS, THERE AREN'T MANY LISTENERS WHO ACTUALLY CHECK THE STATION'S WEBSITE.
I KNOW IT'S IN BAD TASTE TO SAY THIS SINCE SOMEONE LOST THEIR LIFE...
BUT THIS COULD MAKE FOR GOOD PRESS FOR THE SHOW IF WE PLAY OUR CARDS RIGHT.
HOWEVER...
...IF WE MANAGE TO CATCH A WAVE, THEN THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING.

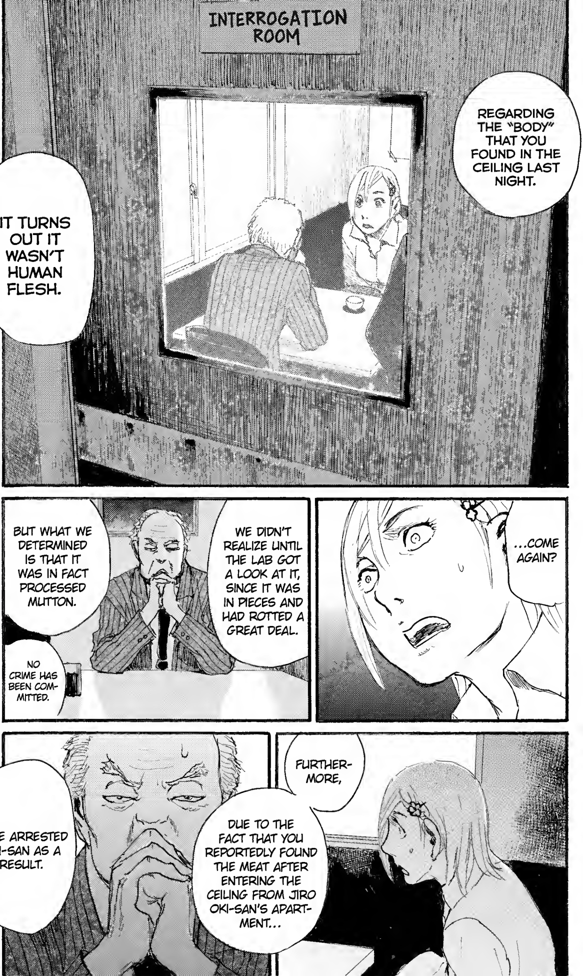

This is *News Pickup,* news at nine.
At a north Sapporo apartment around 11 p.m. last night…
SO, ABOUT THAT DUMPED BODY THAT'S ALL OVER THE NEWS RIGHT NOW.
GET THIS, APPARENTLY THE ONE WHO FOUND IT WAS ONE OF MRS'S RADIO PERSONALITIES.
WHOA-HO!
OH, I SEE NOW.
THERE ARE SIX NEWS SHOWS SCHEDULED UNTIL THE THIRD BROADCAST.
WITH THIS MANY FOLLOW-UP REPORTS, WE SHOULD BE GOLDEN.
OOP! THERE'S OUR GIRL.

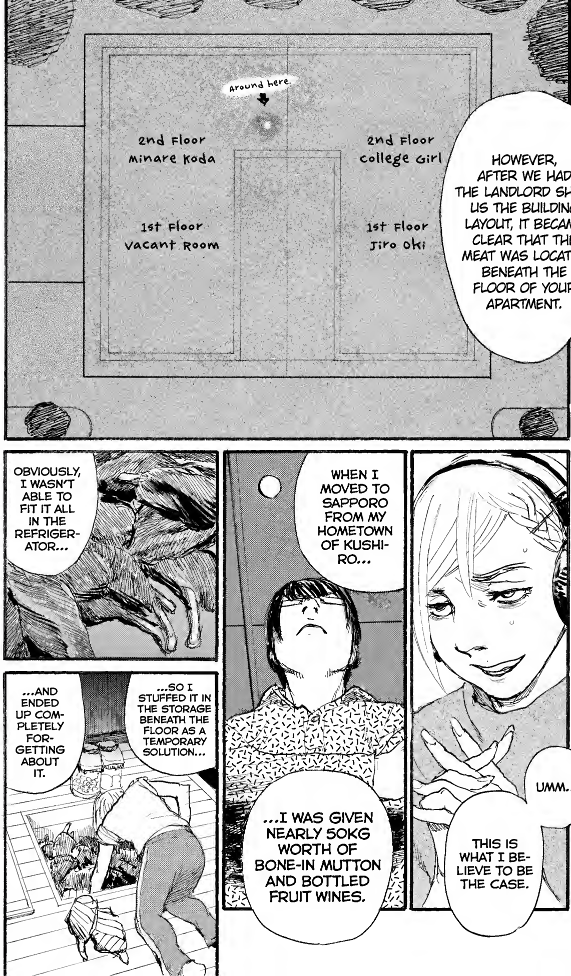

MUMBLE
MUMBLE
OH, MAN. I TOTALLY FORGOT.
THE ODORI PARK ZOMBIE WALK STARTED TODAY?
I'M PRETTY SURE THAT'S NEXT MONTH.
IN THE END...

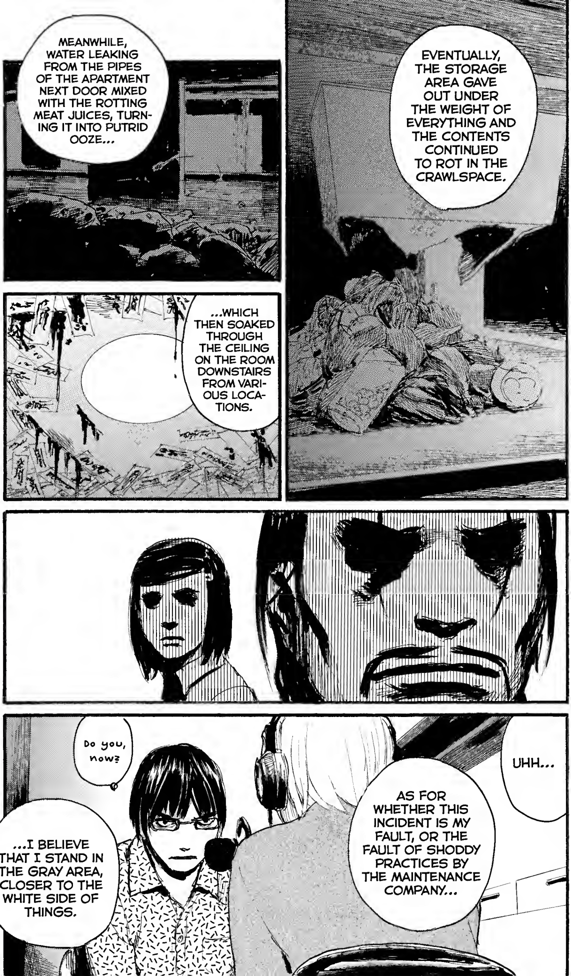

...THE BIZARRE HAPPENING THAT MINARE-SAN AND I EXPERIENCED THAT NIGHT...
...DIDN'T END UP MAKING HEADLINES ON TV OR PAPERS NATIONWIDE AS A MURDER AND CORPSE FINDING...
ews NEW!
ial Murder and Corpse Finding?! Outcome No One Suspected
Lovers' Lane
Sharing a Negima Skewer the B
I Alway
the Day NEW!
Stigmata" to the Names of Italian akes Them Sound like Anime?!
Trending
Move Over Hydrogen Water! Dihydrogen is the New Hotness
...BUT ONLY WOUND UP IN THE CORNER OF THE LOCAL PAPER'S WEBPAGE...
Corpse in the Ceiling
Police Called! -> Ho
1: Genghis Khan★Forever
http://jp.kitashinnews.com
Ehh...
2: Anonymous : 2015/09
That's women for you.
3: Anonymous : 2015/09
Yeah, that happens...said
4: Anonymous : 2015/09/26 (Sat) 20:18:39
Are the apartment ceilings connected?
5: Anonymous : 2015/09/26 (Sat) 20:18:39 ID:6x
...AND WAS MENTIONED IN PASSING ON THE FORUM WHICH FOUND THE ARTICLE.
AND SO...
...THE DAY OF WAVE, LISTEN TO ME'S THIRD RECORDING ARRIVED.

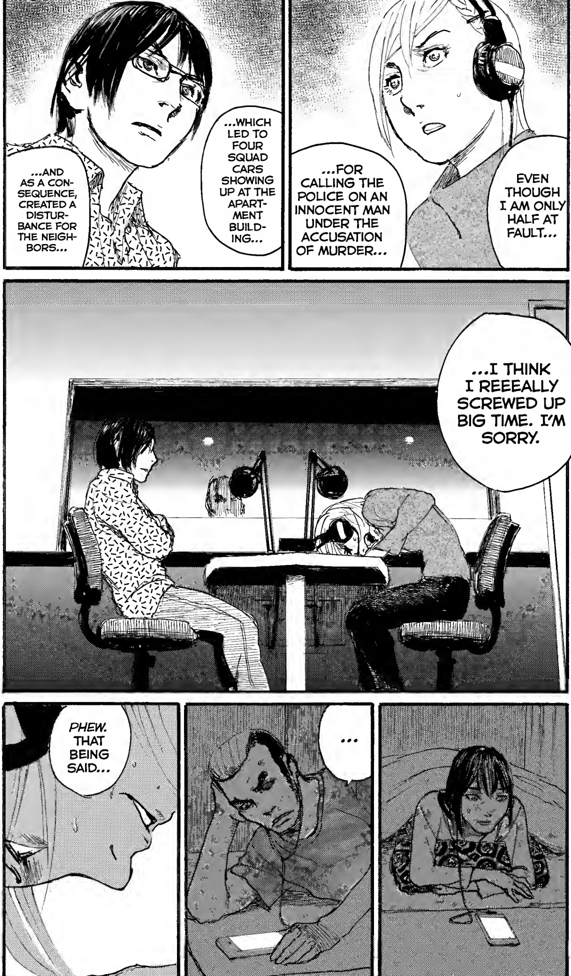

CHA CHARA CHAA CHAA
CHA CHARA CHAA CHAA
CHA CHARA CHAA CHAA, CHA CHARA CHAA
HOJOTOHO! HOJOTOHO!
THIS IS MINARE KODA'S WAVE, LISTEN TO...
MEEEEE!

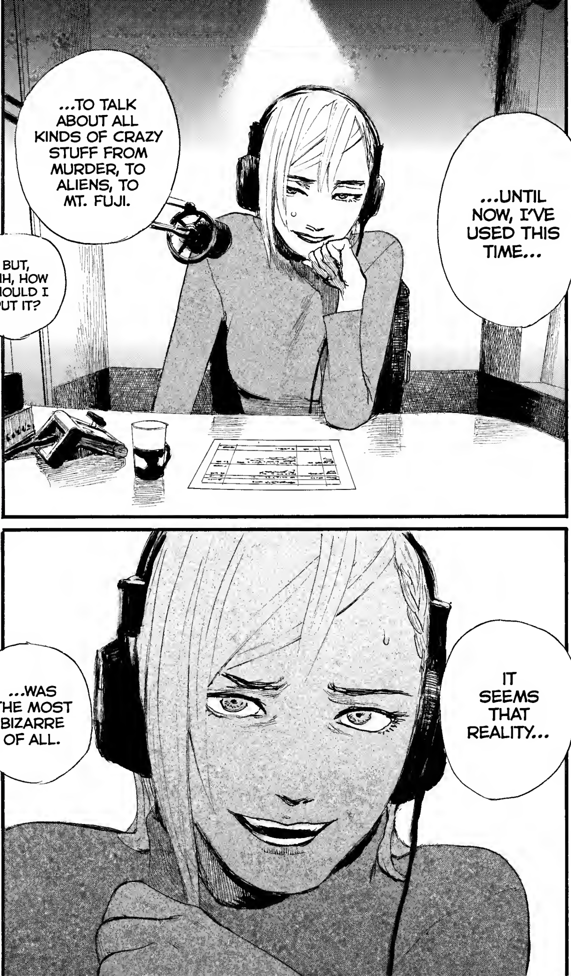

IT'S 3 A.M., A TIME WHEN EVEN PLANTS ARE ASLEEP.
I'M NOT SURE WHAT ALL YOU WHO HAVE STAYED UP THIS LATE TO LISTEN ARE HOPING TO HEAR.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU... I'M ROOKIE RADIO PERSONALITY, MINARE KODA.
UHH...
WELL, TO BE SPECIFIC, THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME WE'VE MET, BUT BEAR WITH ME.
UMM... REGARDING WHAT THE CONCEPT OF THIS SHOW IS, OR WHAT KIND OF FORMAT IT WILL TAKE,
BEFORE WE GET INTO THAT...
...I MUST FIRST USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APOLOGIZE TO A CERTAIN MAN AND THE WORLD AT LARGE.
SHE'S SLURRING A LOT TODAY.
ERR... AS IT'S BEEN LISTED ON THE WEBSITES OF THE HOKKAIDO PRESS AND OTHER OUTLETS...
...I'M SURE SOME OF YOU ARE AWARE OF THIS LITTLE BIT OF NEWS, BUT...
03:40 Keep talking about that night.
03:32 Talk about that night.

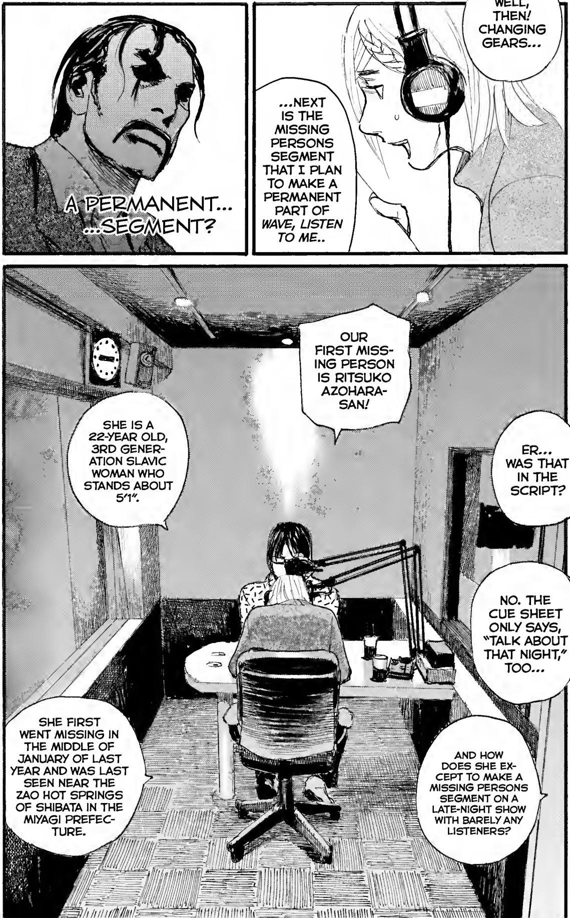

INTERROGATION ROOM
REGARDING THE "BODY" THAT YOU FOUND IN THE CEILING LAST NIGHT.
IT TURNS OUT IT WASN'T HUMAN FLESH.
WE DIDN'T REALIZE UNTIL THE LAB GOT A LOOK AT IT, SINCE IT WAS IN PIECES AND HAD ROTTED A GREAT DEAL.
BUT WHAT WE DETERMINED IS THAT IT WAS IN FACT PROCESSED MUTTON.
NO CRIME HAS BEEN COMMITTED.
...COME AGAIN?
FURTHERMORE,
DUE TO THE FACT THAT YOU REPORTEDLY FOUND THE MEAT AFTER ENTERING THE CEILING FROM JIRO OKI-SAN'S APARTMENT...
...WE ARRESTED OKI-SAN AS A RESULT.

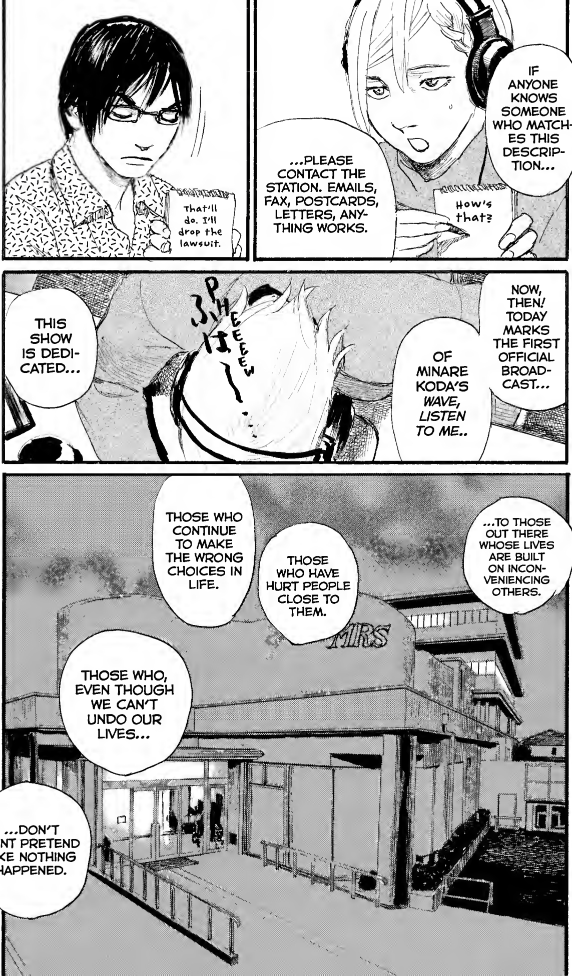

Around here.
2nd Floor Minare Koda
2nd Floor College Girl
1st Floor Vacant Room
1st Floor Jiro Oki
HOWEVER, AFTER WE HAD THE LANDLORD SHOW US THE BUILDING LAYOUT, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE MEAT WAS LOCATED BENEATH THE FLOOR OF YOUR APARTMENT.
UMM...
THIS IS WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE THE CASE.
WHEN I MOVED TO SAPPORO FROM MY HOMETOWN OF KUSHIRO...
...I WAS GIVEN NEARLY 50KG WORTH OF BONE-IN MUTTON AND BOTTLED FRUIT WINES.
OBVIOUSLY, I WASN'T ABLE TO FIT IT ALL IN THE REFRIGERATOR...
...SO I STUFFED IT IN THE STORAGE BENEATH THE FLOOR AS A TEMPORARY SOLUTION...
...AND ENDED UP COMPLETELY FORGETTING ABOUT IT.

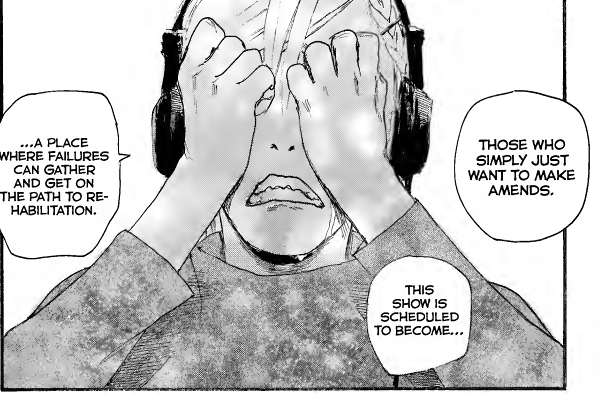

EVENTUALLY, THE STORAGE AREA GAVE OUT UNDER THE WEIGHT OF EVERYTHING AND THE CONTENTS CONTINUED TO ROT IN THE CRAWLSPACE.
MEANWHILE, WATER LEAKING FROM THE PIPES OF THE APARTMENT NEXT DOOR MIXED WITH THE ROTTING MEAT JUICES, TURNING IT INTO PUTRID OOZE...
...WHICH THEN SOAKED THROUGH THE CEILING ON THE ROOM DOWNSTAIRS FROM VARIOUS LOCATIONS.
UHH...
AS FOR WHETHER THIS INCIDENT IS MY FAULT, OR THE FAULT OF SHODDY PRACTICES BY THE MAINTENANCE COMPANY...
...I BELIEVE THAT I STAND IN THE GRAY AREA, CLOSER TO THE WHITE SIDE OF THINGS.
Do you, now?

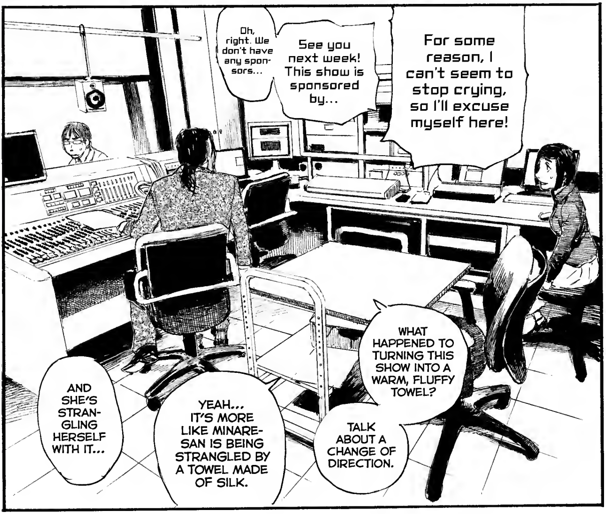

EVEN THOUGH I AM ONLY HALF AT FAULT...
...FOR CALLING THE POLICE ON AN INNOCENT MAN UNDER THE ACCUSATION OF MURDER...
...WHICH LED TO FOUR SQUAD CARS SHOWING UP AT THE APARTMENT BUILDING...
...AND AS A CONSEQUENCE, CREATED A DISTURBANCE FOR THE NEIGHBORS...
...I THINK I REEEALLY SCREWED UP BIG TIME. I'M SORRY.
...
PHEW. THAT BEING SAID...


...UNTIL NOW, I'VE USED THIS TIME...
...TO TALK ABOUT ALL KINDS OF CRAZY STUFF FROM MURDER, TO ALIENS, TO MT. FUJI.
BUT, UHH, HOW SHOULD I PUT IT?
IT SEEMS THAT REALITY...
...WAS THE MOST BIZARRE OF ALL.

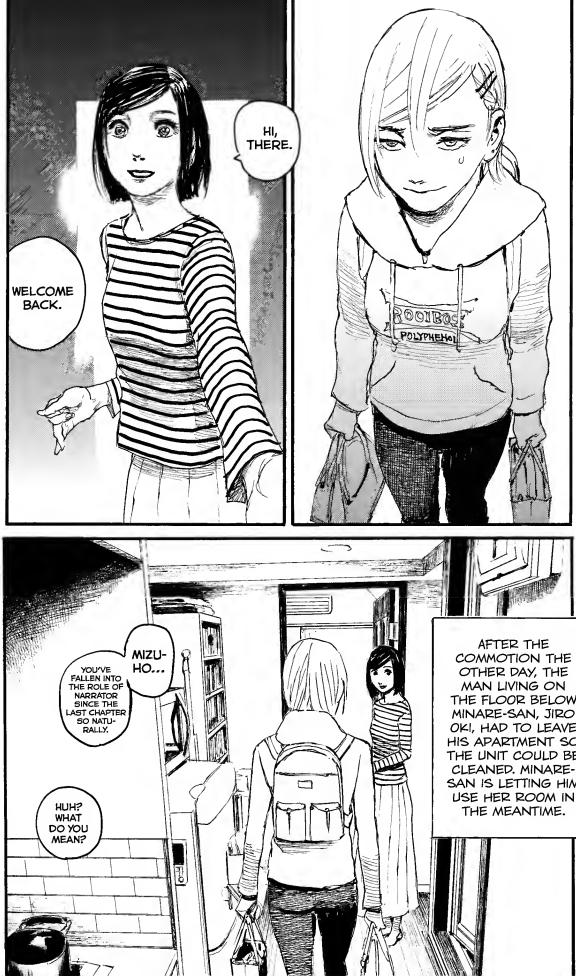

WELL, THEN! CHANGING GEARS...
...NEXT IS THE MISSING PERSONS SEGMENT THAT I PLAN TO MAKE A PERMANENT PART OF *WAVE, LISTEN TO ME*..
A PERMANENT... ...SEGMENT?
OUR FIRST MISSING PERSON IS RITSUKO AZOHARA-SAN!
SHE IS A 22-YEAR OLD, 3RD GENERATION SLAVIC WOMAN WHO STANDS ABOUT 5'1".
ER... WAS THAT IN THE SCRIPT?
NO. THE CUE SHEET ONLY SAYS, "TALK ABOUT THAT NIGHT," TOO...
SHE FIRST WENT MISSING IN THE MIDDLE OF JANUARY OF LAST YEAR AND WAS LAST SEEN NEAR THE ZAO HOT SPRINGS OF SHIBATA IN THE MIYAGI PREFECTURE.
AND HOW DOES SHE EXCEPT TO MAKE A MISSING PERSONS SEGMENT ON A LATE-NIGHT SHOW WITH BARELY ANY LISTENERS?

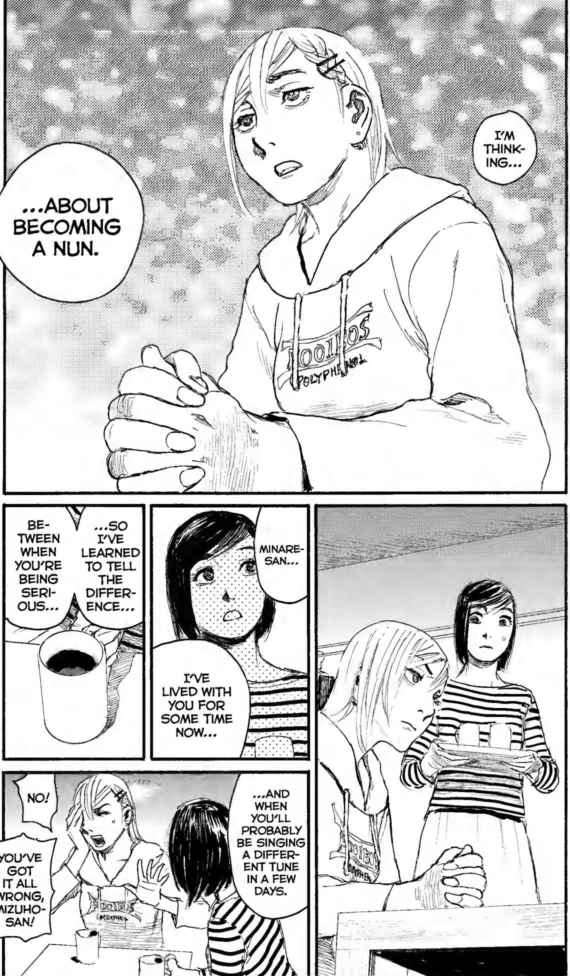

IF ANYONE KNOWS SOMEONE WHO MATCHES THIS DESCRIPTION...
...PLEASE CONTACT THE STATION. EMAILS, FAX, POSTCARDS, LETTERS, ANYTHING WORKS.
How's that?
That'll do. I'll drop the lawsuit.
NOW, THEN! TODAY MARKS THE FIRST OFFICIAL BROADCAST...
OF MINARE KODA'S *WAVE, LISTEN TO ME*..
PHEEEEW
THIS SHOW IS DEDICATED...
...TO THOSE OUT THERE WHOSE LIVES ARE BUILT ON INCONVENIENCING OTHERS.
THOSE WHO HAVE HURT PEOPLE CLOSE TO THEM.
THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO MAKE THE WRONG CHOICES IN LIFE.
MRS
THOSE WHO, EVEN THOUGH WE CAN'T UNDO OUR LIVES...
...DON'T WANT PRETEND LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED.

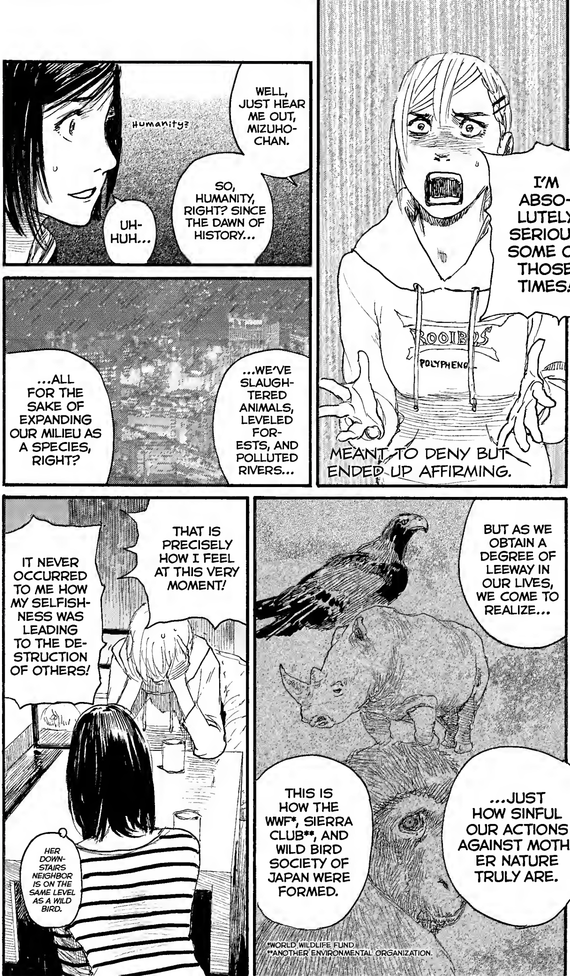

THOSE WHO SIMPLY JUST WANT TO MAKE AMENDS.
...A PLACE WHERE FAILURES CAN GATHER AND GET ON THE PATH TO REHABILITATION.
THIS SHOW IS SCHEDULED TO BECOME...


For some reason, I can't seem to stop crying, so I'll excuse myself here!
See you next week! This show is sponsored by...
Oh, right. We don't have any sponsors...
WHAT HAPPENED TO TURNING THIS SHOW INTO A WARM, FLUFFY TOWEL?
TALK ABOUT A CHANGE OF DIRECTION.
YEAH... IT'S MORE LIKE MINARE-SAN IS BEING STRANGLED BY A TOWEL MADE OF SILK.
AND SHE'S STRANGLING HERSELF WITH IT...

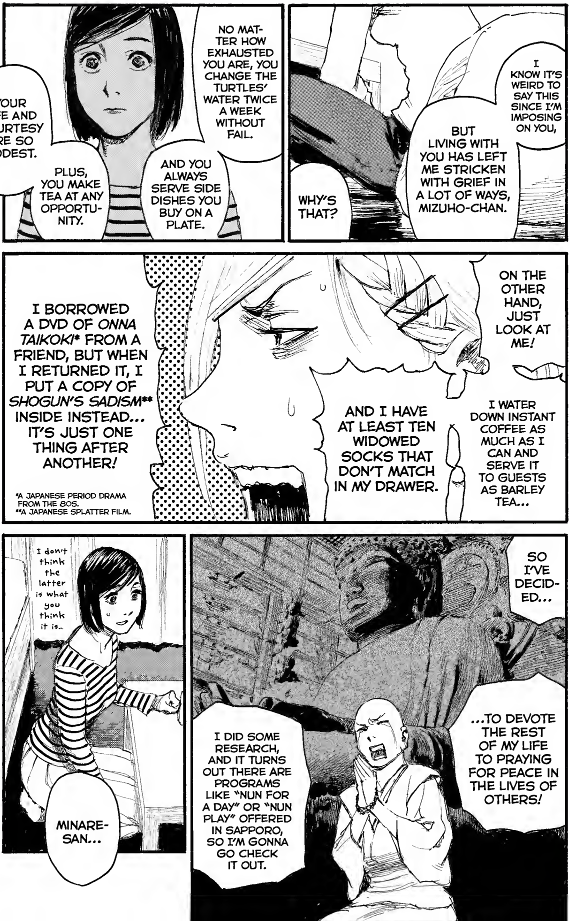
Chapter 23 「I WANT TO SUPPORT YOU.」


ROOIBOS
POLYPHEHOL
HI, THERE.
WELCOME BACK.
AFTER THE COMMOTION THE OTHER DAY, THE MAN LIVING ON THE FLOOR BELOW MINARE-SAN, JIRO OKI, HAD TO LEAVE HIS APARTMENT SO THE UNIT COULD BE CLEANED. MINARE-SAN IS LETTING HIM USE HER ROOM IN THE MEANTIME.
MIZUHO...
YOU'VE FALLEN INTO THE ROLE OF NARRATOR SINCE THE LAST CHAPTER SO NATURALLY.
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

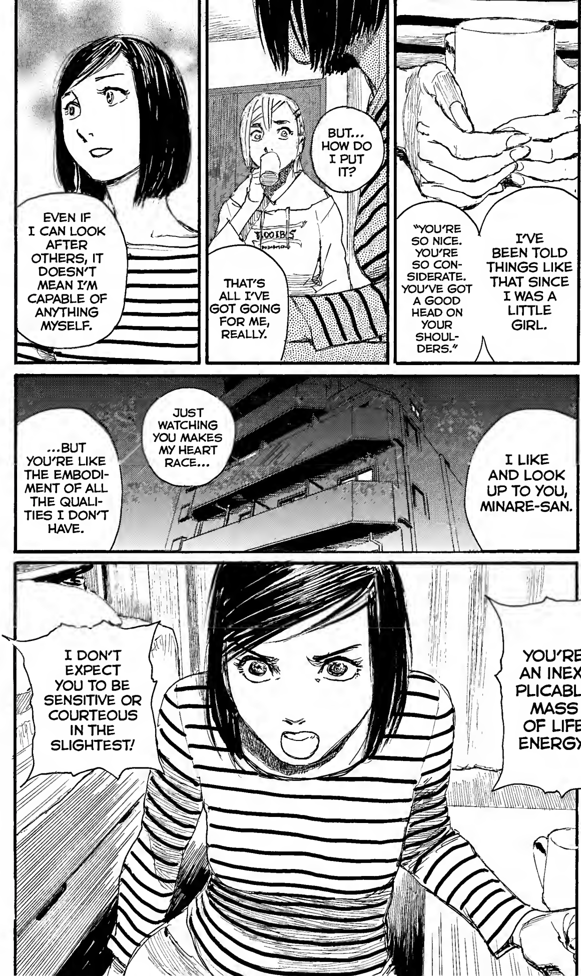

I'M THINKING...
...ABOUT BECOMING A NUN.
ROOIBOS POLYPHENOL
MINARE-SAN...
I'VE LIVED WITH YOU FOR SOME TIME NOW...
...SO I'VE LEARNED TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE...
BETWEEN WHEN YOU'RE BEING SERIOUS...
...AND WHEN YOU'LL PROBABLY BE SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE IN A FEW DAYS.
NO!
YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG, MIZUHO-SAN!

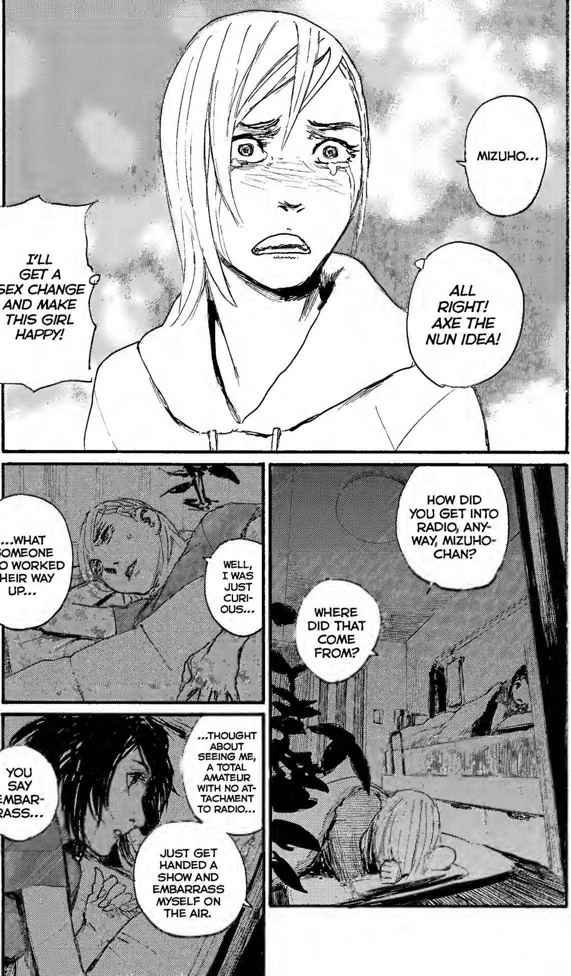

I'M ABSOLUTELY SERIOUS SOME OF THOSE TIMES!
ROOIBOS
POLYPHENO
MEANT TO DENY BUT ENDED UP AFFIRMING.
WELL, JUST HEAR ME OUT, MIZUHO-CHAN.
Humanity?
SO, HUMANITY, RIGHT? SINCE THE DAWN OF HISTORY...
UH-HUH...
...WE'VE SLAUGHTERED ANIMALS, LEVELED FORESTS, AND POLLUTED RIVERS...
...ALL FOR THE SAKE OF EXPANDING OUR MILIEU AS A SPECIES, RIGHT?
BUT AS WE OBTAIN A DEGREE OF LEEWAY IN OUR LIVES, WE COME TO REALIZE...
...JUST HOW SINFUL OUR ACTIONS AGAINST MOTHER NATURE TRULY ARE.
THIS IS HOW THE WWF*, SIERRA CLUB**, AND WILD BIRD SOCIETY OF JAPAN WERE FORMED.
THAT IS PRECISELY HOW I FEEL AT THIS VERY MOMENT!
IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME HOW MY SELFISHNESS WAS LEADING TO THE DESTRUCTION OF OTHERS!
HER DOWNSTAIRS NEIGHBOR IS ON THE SAME LEVEL AS A WILD BIRD.

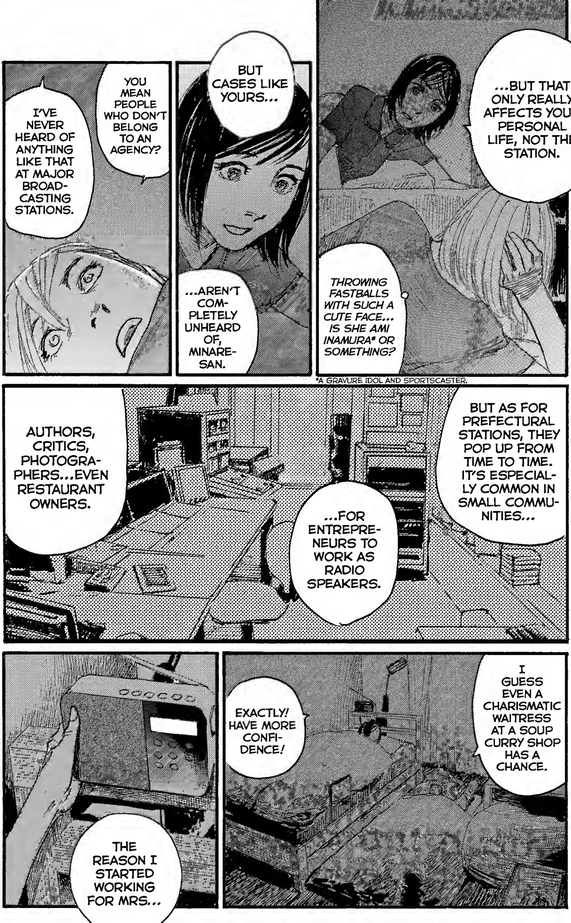
*WORLD WILDLIFE FUND
**ANOTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION.


I KNOW IT'S WEIRD TO SAY THIS SINCE I'M IMPOSING ON YOU,
BUT LIVING WITH YOU HAS LEFT ME STRICKEN WITH GRIEF IN A LOT OF WAYS, MIZUHO-CHAN.
WHY'S THAT?
NO MATTER HOW EXHAUSTED YOU ARE, YOU CHANGE THE TURTLES' WATER TWICE A WEEK WITHOUT FAIL.
AND YOU ALWAYS SERVE SIDE DISHES YOU BUY ON A PLATE.
PLUS, YOU MAKE TEA AT ANY OPPORTUNITY.
YOUR LIFE AND COURTESY ARE SO MODEST.
ON THE OTHER HAND, JUST LOOK AT ME!
I WATER DOWN INSTANT COFFEE AS MUCH AS I CAN AND SERVE IT TO GUESTS AS BARLEY TEA...
AND I HAVE AT LEAST TEN WIDOWED SOCKS THAT DON'T MATCH IN MY DRAWER.
I BORROWED A DVD OF *ONNA TAIKOKI** FROM A FRIEND, BUT WHEN I RETURNED IT, I PUT A COPY OF *SHOGUN'S SADISM*** INSIDE INSTEAD... IT'S JUST ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER!
SO I'VE DECIDED...
...TO DEVOTE THE REST OF MY LIFE TO PRAYING FOR PEACE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS!
I DID SOME RESEARCH, AND IT TURNS OUT THERE ARE PROGRAMS LIKE "NUN FOR A DAY" OR "NUN PLAY" OFFERED IN SAPPORO, SO I'M GONNA GO CHECK IT OUT.
I don't think the latter is what you think it is...
MINARE-SAN...

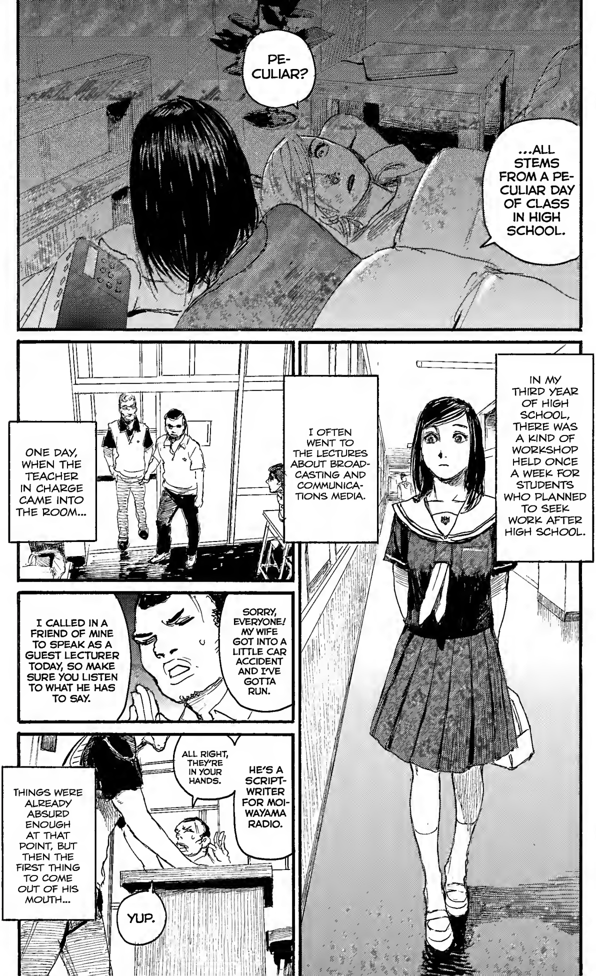
*A JAPANESE PERIOD DRAMA FROM THE 80S.
**A JAPANESE SPLATTER FILM.

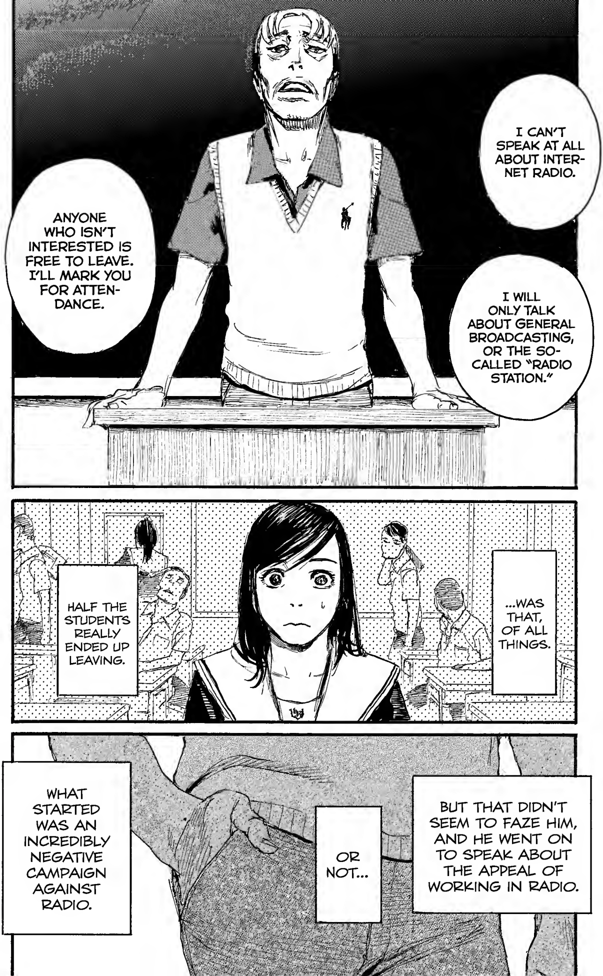

I'VE BEEN TOLD THINGS LIKE THAT SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL.
"YOU'RE SO NICE. YOU'RE SO CONSIDERATE. YOU'VE GOT A GOOD HEAD ON YOUR SHOULDERS."
BUT... HOW DO I PUT IT?
THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT GOING FOR ME, REALLY.
EVEN IF I CAN LOOK AFTER OTHERS, IT DOESN'T MEAN I'M CAPABLE OF ANYTHING MYSELF.
I LIKE AND LOOK UP TO YOU, MINARE-SAN.
JUST WATCHING YOU MAKES MY HEART RACE...
...BUT YOU'RE LIKE THE EMBODIMENT OF ALL THE QUALITIES I DON'T HAVE.
YOU'RE AN INEXPLICABLE MASS OF LIFE ENERGY!
I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO BE SENSITIVE OR COURTEOUS IN THE SLIGHTEST!

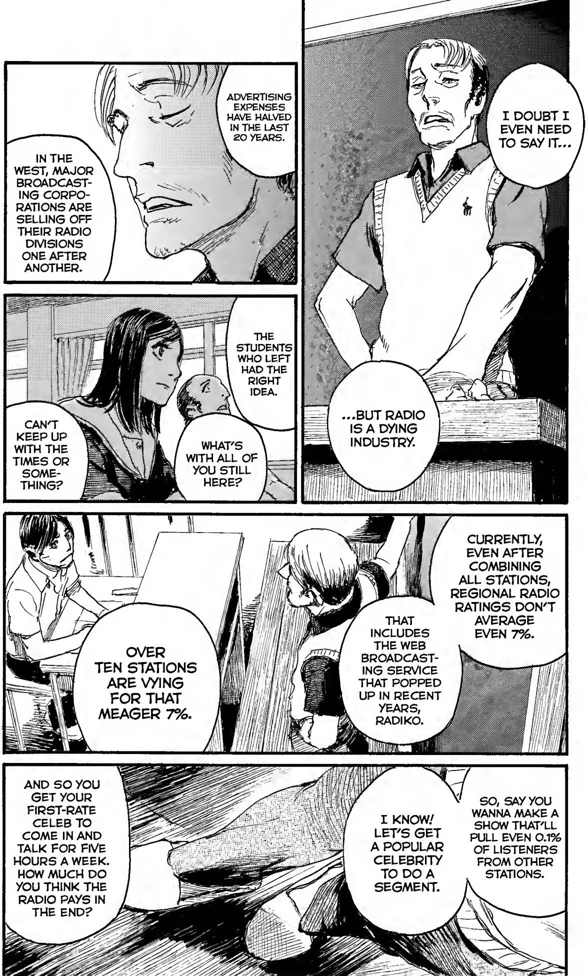

MIZUHO...
ALL RIGHT! AXE THE NUN IDEA!
I'LL GET A SEX CHANGE AND MAKE THIS GIRL HAPPY!
HOW DID YOU GET INTO RADIO, ANYWAY, MIZUHO-CHAN?
WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?
WELL, I WAS JUST CURIOUS...
...WHAT SOMEONE WHO WORKED THEIR WAY UP...
...THOUGHT ABOUT SEEING ME, A TOTAL AMATEUR WITH NO ATTACHMENT TO RADIO...
JUST GET HANDED A SHOW AND EMBARRASS MYSELF ON THE AIR.
YOU SAY EMBARRASS...

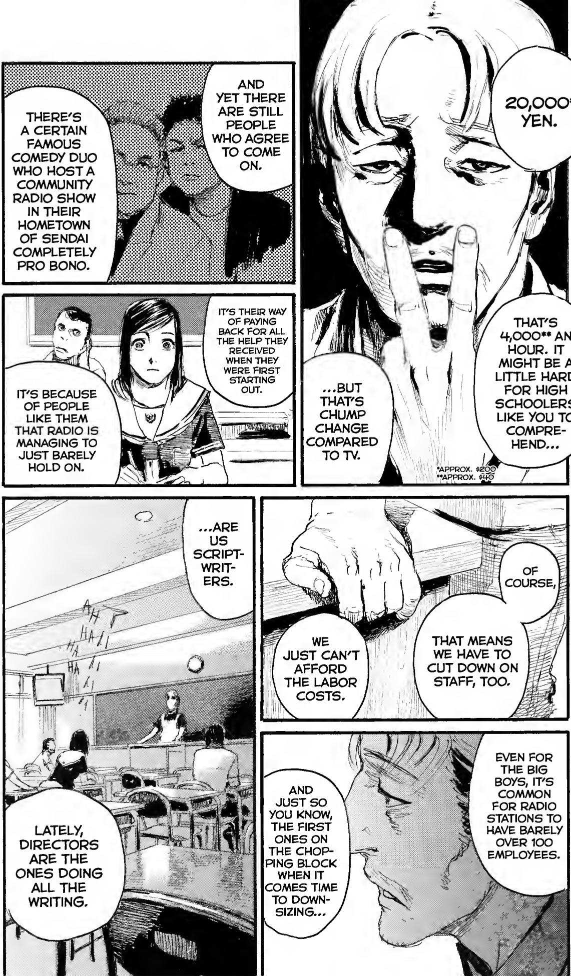

...BUT THAT ONLY REALLY AFFECTS YOUR PERSONAL LIFE, NOT THE STATION.
THROWING FASTBALLS WITH SUCH A CUTE FACE... IS SHE AMI INAMURA OR SOMETHING?*
BUT CASES LIKE YOURS...
...AREN'T COMPLETELY UNHEARD OF, MINARE-SAN.
YOU MEAN PEOPLE WHO DON'T BELONG TO AN AGENCY?
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF ANYTHING LIKE THAT AT MAJOR BROADCASTING STATIONS.
BUT AS FOR PREFECTURAL STATIONS, THEY POP UP FROM TIME TO TIME. IT'S ESPECIALLY COMMON IN SMALL COMMUNITIES...
...FOR ENTREPRENEURS TO WORK AS RADIO SPEAKERS.
AUTHORS, CRITICS, PHOTOGRAPHERS...EVEN RESTAURANT OWNERS.
I GUESS EVEN A CHARISMATIC WAITRESS AT A SOUP CURRY SHOP HAS A CHANCE.
EXACTLY! HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE!
THE REASON I STARTED WORKING FOR MRS...

*A GRAVURE IDOL AND SPORTSCASTER.

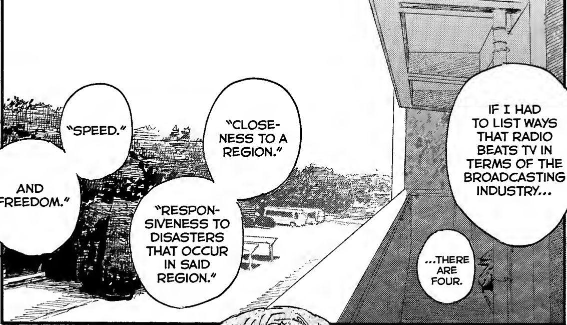

...ALL STEMS FROM A PECULIAR DAY OF CLASS IN HIGH SCHOOL.
PECULIAR?
IN MY THIRD YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL, THERE WAS A KIND OF WORKSHOP HELD ONCE A WEEK FOR STUDENTS WHO PLANNED TO SEEK WORK AFTER HIGH SCHOOL.
I OFTEN WENT TO THE LECTURES ABOUT BROADCASTING AND COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA.
ONE DAY, WHEN THE TEACHER IN CHARGE CAME INTO THE ROOM...
SORRY, EVERYONE! MY WIFE GOT INTO A LITTLE CAR ACCIDENT AND I'VE GOTTA RUN.
I CALLED IN A FRIEND OF MINE TO SPEAK AS A GUEST LECTURER TODAY, SO MAKE SURE YOU LISTEN TO WHAT HE HAS TO SAY.
HE'S A SCRIPTWRITER FOR MOIWAYAMA RADIO.
ALL RIGHT, THEY'RE IN YOUR HANDS.
YUP.
THINGS WERE ALREADY ABSURD ENOUGH AT THAT POINT, BUT THEN THE FIRST THING TO COME OUT OF HIS MOUTH...

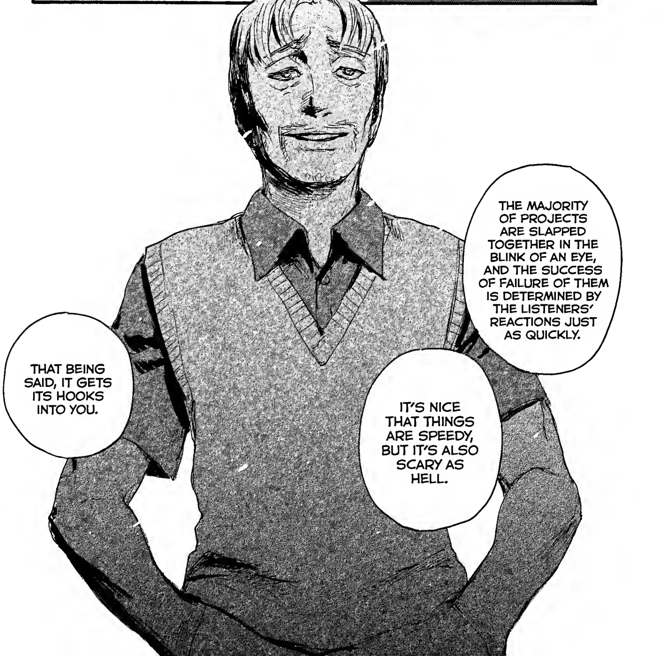

I CAN'T SPEAK AT ALL ABOUT INTERNET RADIO.
I WILL ONLY TALK ABOUT GENERAL BROADCASTING, OR THE SO-CALLED "RADIO STATION."
ANYONE WHO ISN'T INTERESTED IS FREE TO LEAVE. I'LL MARK YOU FOR ATTENDANCE.
...WAS THAT, OF ALL THINGS.
HALF THE STUDENTS REALLY ENDED UP LEAVING.
BUT THAT DIDN'T SEEM TO FAZE HIM, AND HE WENT ON TO SPEAK ABOUT THE APPEAL OF WORKING IN RADIO.
OR NOT...
WHAT STARTED WAS AN INCREDIBLY NEGATIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST RADIO.

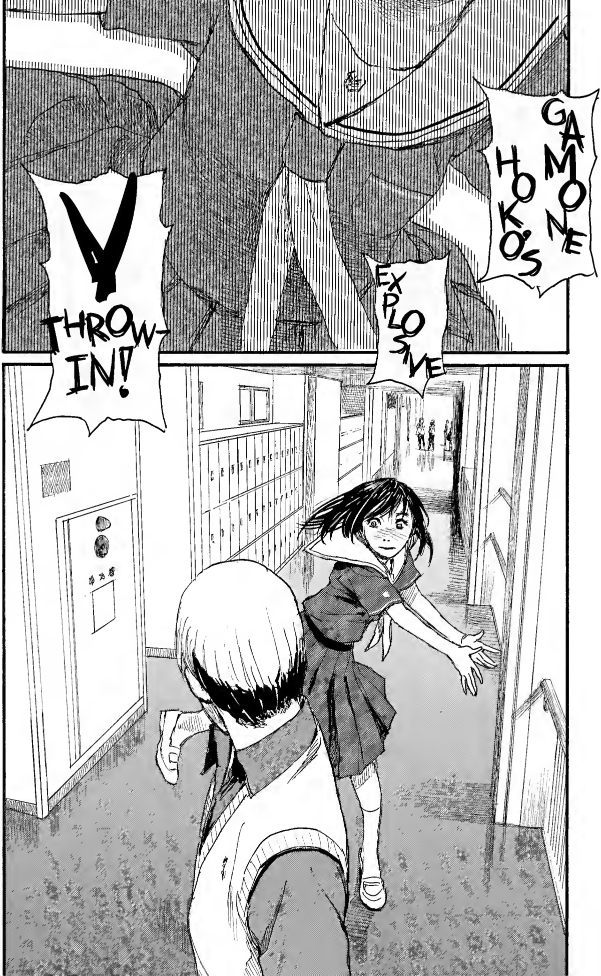

I DOUBT I EVEN NEED TO SAY IT...
...BUT RADIO IS A DYING INDUSTRY.
ADVERTISING EXPENSES HAVE HALVED IN THE LAST 20 YEARS.
IN THE WEST, MAJOR BROADCASTING CORPORATIONS ARE SELLING OFF THEIR RADIO DIVISIONS ONE AFTER ANOTHER.
THE STUDENTS WHO LEFT HAD THE RIGHT IDEA.
WHAT'S WITH ALL OF YOU STILL HERE?
CAN'T KEEP UP WITH THE TIMES OR SOMETHING?
CURRENTLY, EVEN AFTER COMBINING ALL STATIONS, REGIONAL RADIO RATINGS DON'T AVERAGE EVEN 7%.
THAT INCLUDES THE WEB BROADCASTING SERVICE THAT POPPED UP IN RECENT YEARS, RADIKO.
OVER TEN STATIONS ARE VYING FOR THAT MEAGER 7%.
SO, SAY YOU WANNA MAKE A SHOW THAT'LL PULL EVEN 0.1% OF LISTENERS FROM OTHER STATIONS.
I KNOW! LET'S GET A POPULAR CELEBRITY TO DO A SEGMENT.
AND SO YOU GET YOUR FIRST-RATE CELEB TO COME IN AND TALK FOR FIVE HOURS A WEEK. HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK THE RADIO PAYS IN THE END?

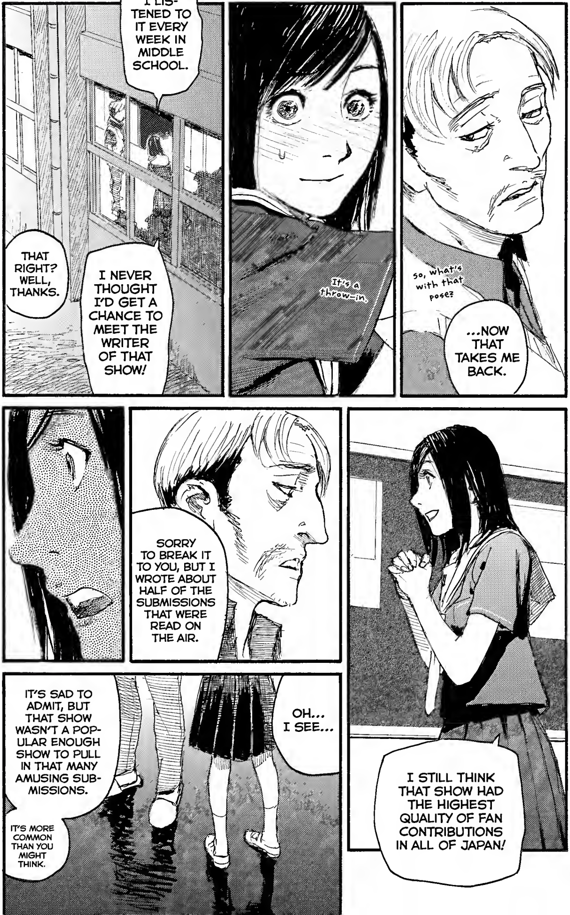

20,000* YEN.
THAT'S 4,000** AN HOUR. IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE HARD FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS LIKE YOU TO COMPREHEND...
...BUT THAT'S CHUMP CHANGE COMPARED TO TV.
AND YET THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WHO AGREE TO COME ON.
THERE'S A CERTAIN FAMOUS COMEDY DUO WHO HOST A COMMUNITY RADIO SHOW IN THEIR HOMETOWN OF SENDAI COMPLETELY PRO BONO.
IT'S THEIR WAY OF PAYING BACK FOR ALL THE HELP THEY RECEIVED WHEN THEY WERE FIRST STARTING OUT.
IT'S BECAUSE OF PEOPLE LIKE THEM THAT RADIO IS MANAGING TO JUST BARELY HOLD ON.
OF COURSE,
THAT MEANS WE HAVE TO CUT DOWN ON STAFF, TOO.
WE JUST CAN'T AFFORD THE LABOR COSTS.
EVEN FOR THE BIG BOYS, IT'S COMMON FOR RADIO STATIONS TO HAVE BARELY OVER 100 EMPLOYEES.
AND JUST SO YOU KNOW, THE FIRST ONES ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK WHEN IT COMES TIME TO DOWNSIZING...
...ARE US SCRIPTWRITERS.
AH HA HA HA HA
LATELY, DIRECTORS ARE THE ONES DOING ALL THE WRITING.

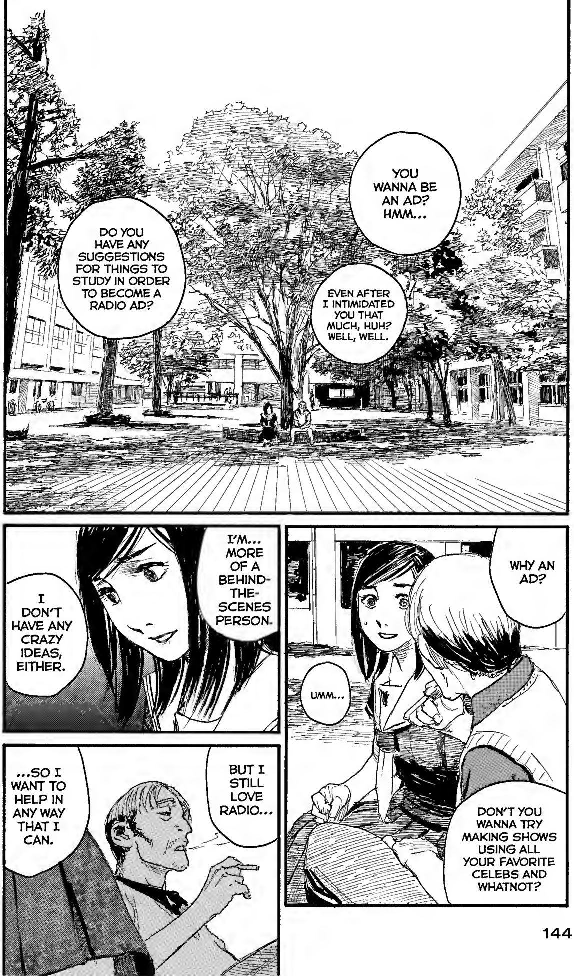
*APPROX. $200
**APPROX. $40

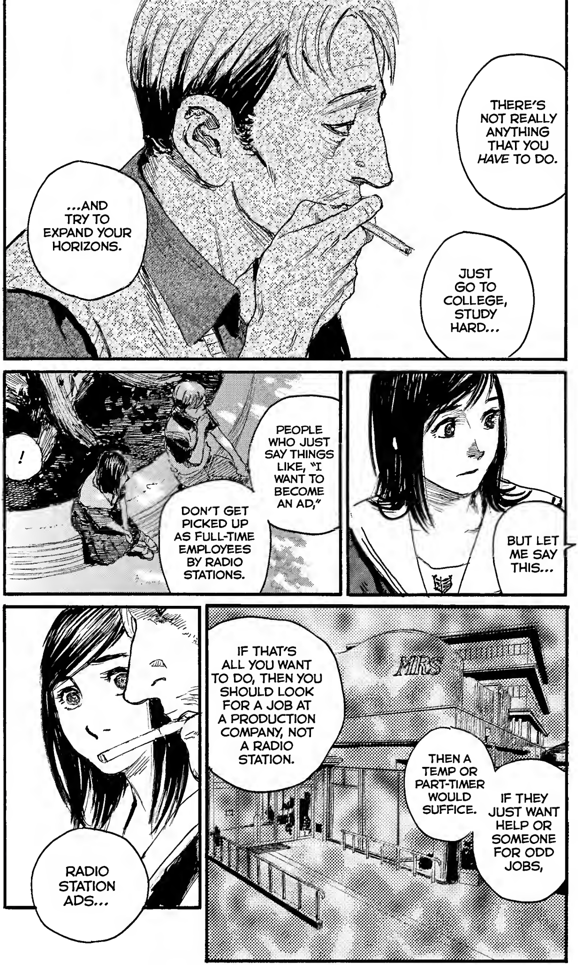

IF I HAD TO LIST WAYS THAT RADIO BEATS TV IN TERMS OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY...
...THERE ARE FOUR.
"CLOSENESS TO A REGION."
"RESPONSIVENESS TO DISASTERS THAT OCCUR IN SAID REGION."
"SPEED."
AND "FREEDOM."

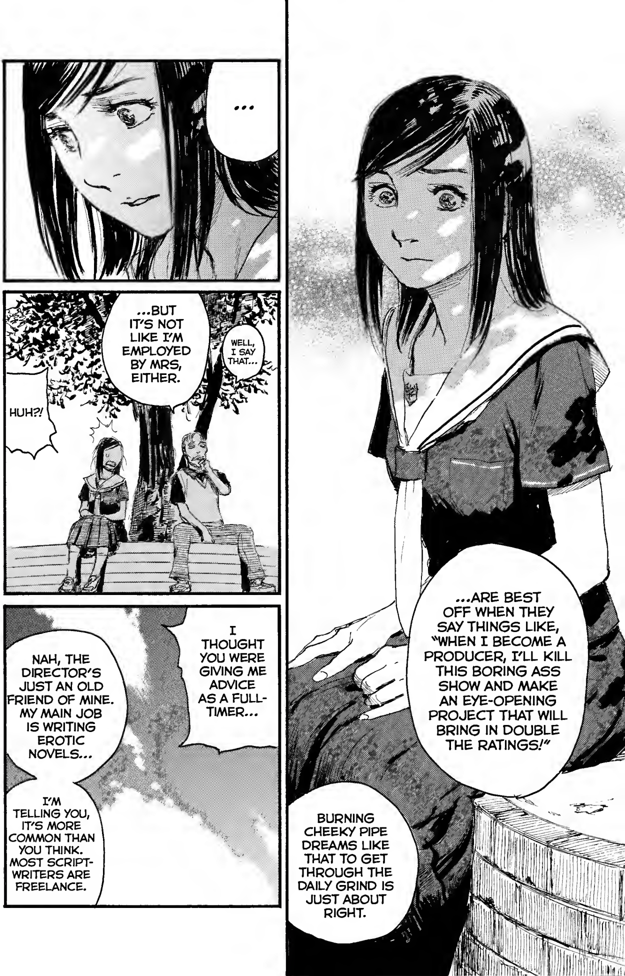

THE MAJORITY OF PROJECTS ARE SLAPPED TOGETHER IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, AND THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE OF THEM IS DETERMINED BY THE LISTENERS' REACTIONS JUST AS QUICKLY.
IT'S NICE THAT THINGS ARE SPEEDY, BUT IT'S ALSO SCARY AS HELL.
THAT BEING SAID, IT GETS ITS HOOKS INTO YOU.

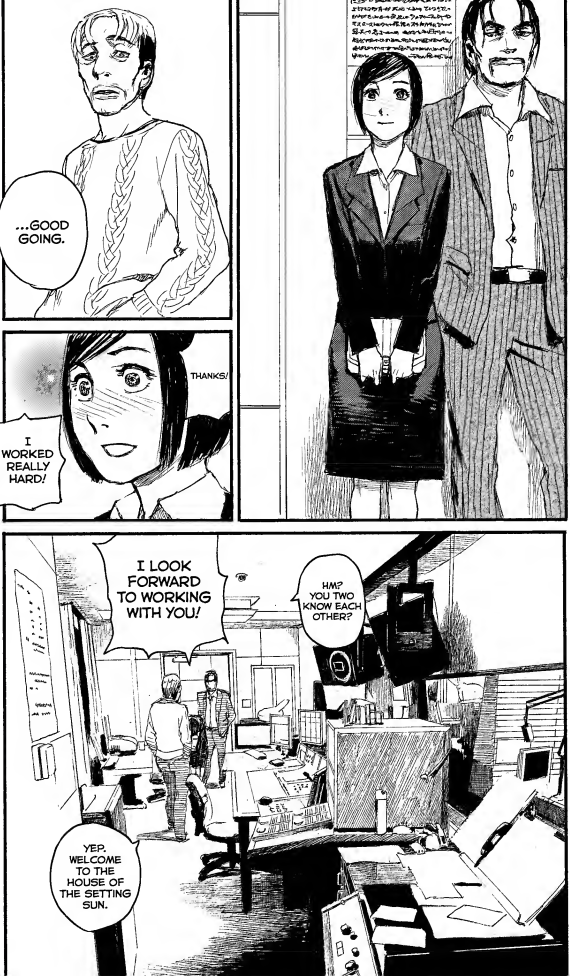

GAMONE
HOKO'S
EXPLOSIVE
V
THROW-IN!

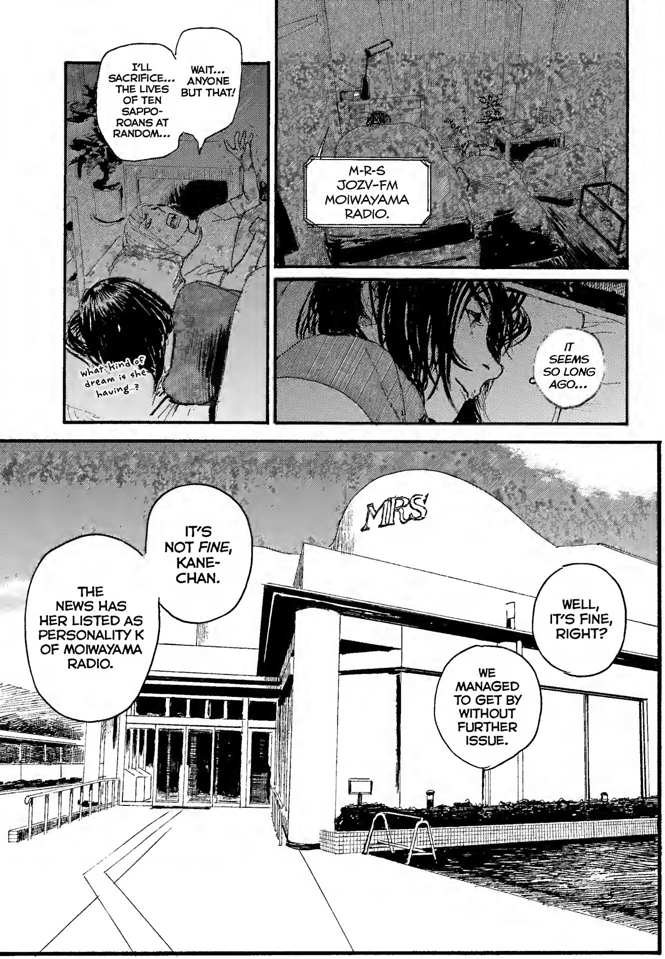

So, what's with that pose?
...NOW THAT TAKES ME BACK.
It's a throw-in.
I LISTENED TO IT EVERY WEEK IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D GET A CHANCE TO MEET THE WRITER OF THAT SHOW!
THAT RIGHT? WELL, THANKS.
I STILL THINK THAT SHOW HAD THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF FAN CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL OF JAPAN!
SORRY TO BREAK IT TO YOU, BUT I WROTE ABOUT HALF OF THE SUBMISSIONS THAT WERE READ ON THE AIR.
OH... I SEE...
IT'S SAD TO ADMIT, BUT THAT SHOW WASN'T A POPULAR ENOUGH SHOW TO PULL IN THAT MANY AMUSING SUBMISSIONS.
IT'S MORE COMMON THAN YOU MIGHT THINK.

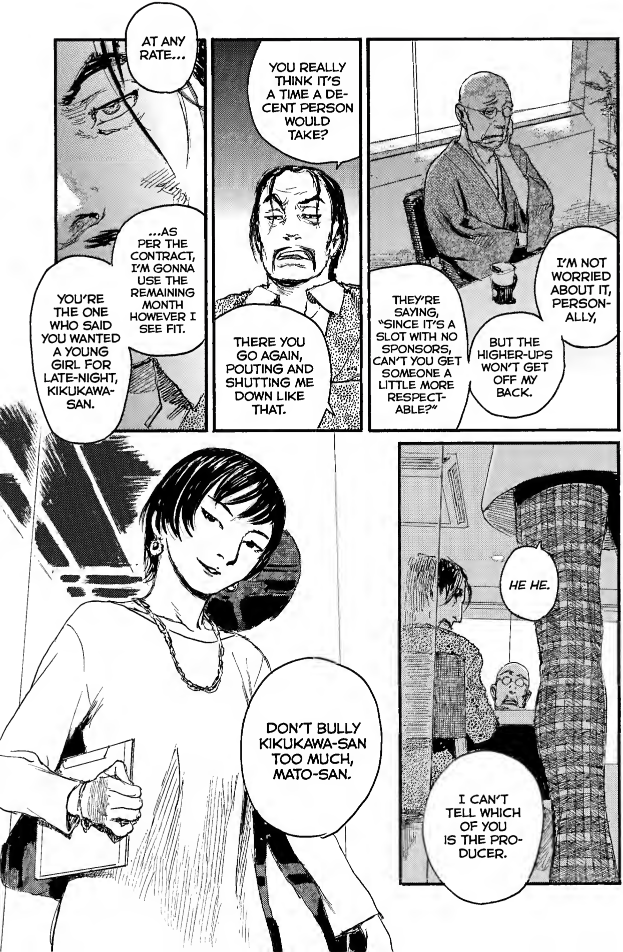

YOU WANNA BE AN AD? HMM...
EVEN AFTER I INTIMIDATED YOU THAT MUCH, HUH? WELL, WELL.
DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THINGS TO STUDY IN ORDER TO BECOME A RADIO AD?
WHY AN AD?
DON'T YOU WANNA TRY MAKING SHOWS USING ALL YOUR FAVORITE CELEBS AND WHATNOT?
UMM...
I'M... MORE OF A BEHIND-THE-SCENES PERSON.
I DON'T HAVE ANY CRAZY IDEAS, EITHER.
BUT I STILL LOVE RADIO...
...SO I WANT TO HELP IN ANY WAY THAT I CAN.

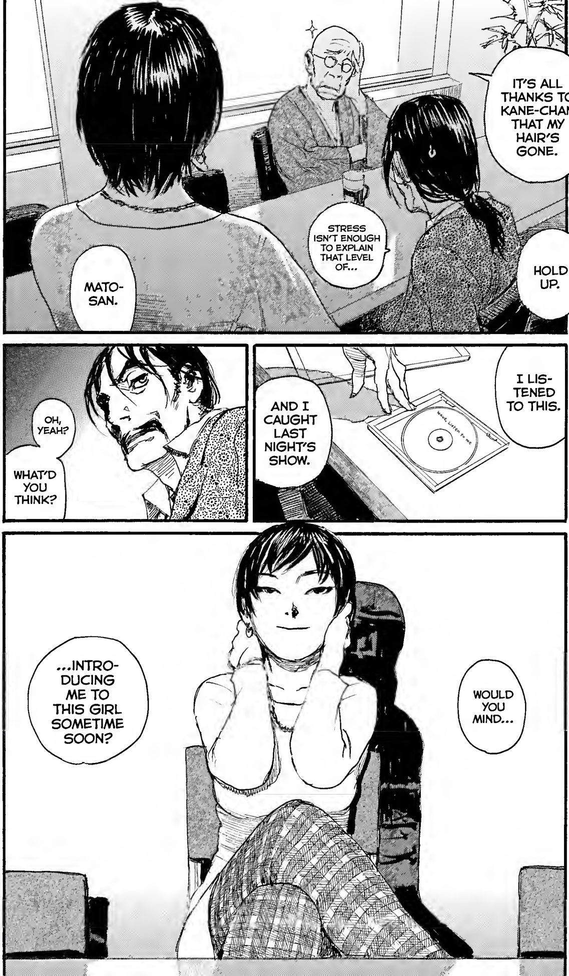

THERE'S NOT REALLY ANYTHING THAT YOU *HAVE* TO DO.
JUST GO TO COLLEGE, STUDY HARD...
...AND TRY TO EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS.
BUT LET ME SAY THIS...
PEOPLE WHO JUST SAY THINGS LIKE, "I WANT TO BECOME AN AD,"
DON'T GET PICKED UP AS FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES BY RADIO STATIONS.
!
MRS
IF THEY JUST WANT HELP OR SOMEONE FOR ODD JOBS,
THEN A TEMP OR PART-TIMER WOULD SUFFICE.
IF THAT'S ALL YOU WANT TO DO, THEN YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR A JOB AT A PRODUCTION COMPANY, NOT A RADIO STATION.
RADIO STATION ADS...


...ARE BEST OFF WHEN THEY SAY THINGS LIKE, "WHEN I BECOME A PRODUCER, I'LL KILL THIS BORING ASS SHOW AND MAKE AN EYE-OPENING PROJECT THAT WILL BRING IN DOUBLE THE RATINGS!"
BURNING CHEEKY PIPE DREAMS LIKE THAT TO GET THROUGH THE DAILY GRIND IS JUST ABOUT RIGHT.
...
WELL, I SAY THAT...
...BUT IT'S NOT LIKE I'M EMPLOYED BY MRS, EITHER.
HUH?!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GIVING ME ADVICE AS A FULL-TIMER...
NAH, THE DIRECTOR'S JUST AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE. MY MAIN JOB IS WRITING EROTIC NOVELS...
I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S MORE COMMON THAN YOU THINK. MOST SCRIPT-WRITERS ARE FREELANCE.

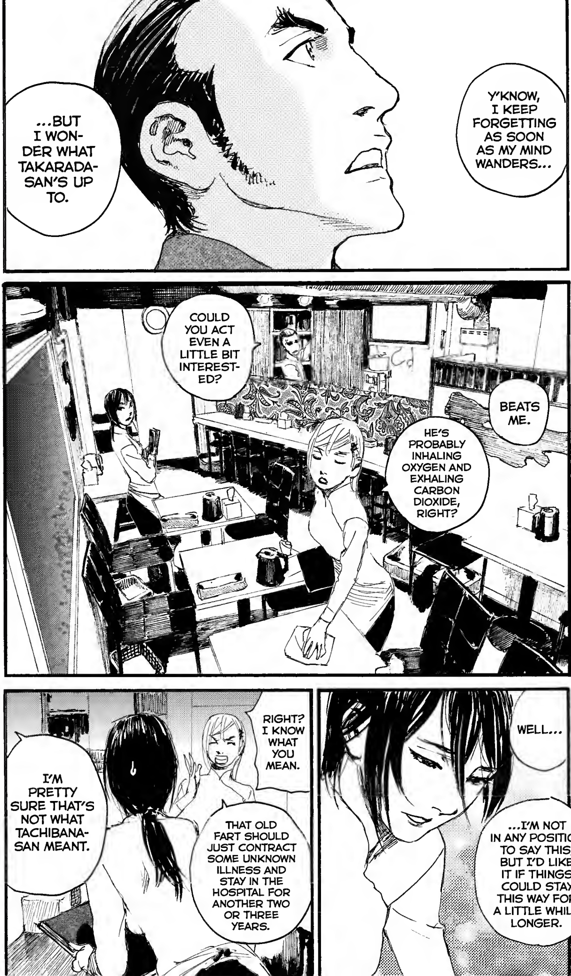

...GOOD GOING.
THANKS!
I WORKED REALLY HARD!
I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU!
HM? YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER?
YEP. WELCOME TO THE HOUSE OF THE SETTING SUN.

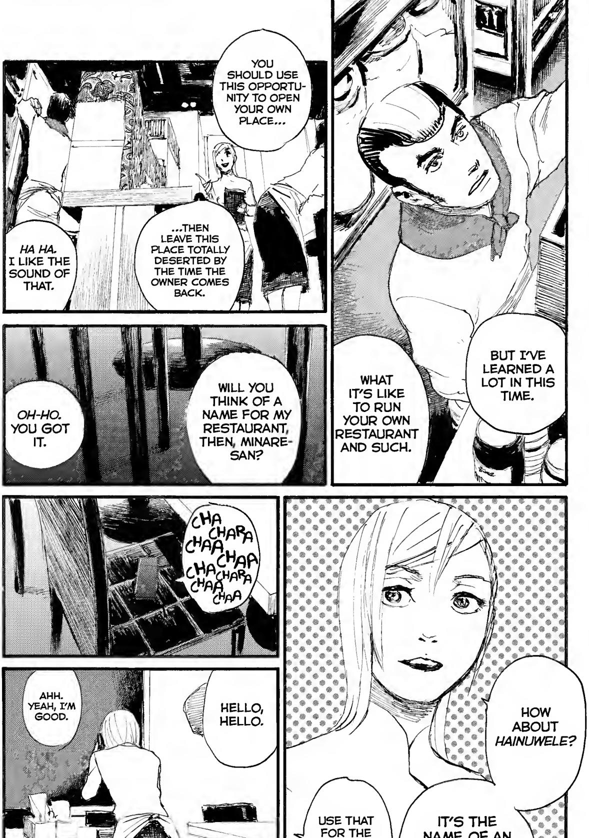

M-R-S JOZV-FM MOIWAYAMA RADIO.
WAIT... ANYONE BUT THAT!
I'LL SACRIFICE... THE LIVES OF TEN SAPPOROANS AT RANDOM...
what kind of dream is she having...?
IT SEEMS SO LONG AGO...
MRS
WELL, IT'S FINE, RIGHT?
WE MANAGED TO GET BY WITHOUT FURTHER ISSUE.
IT'S NOT *FINE*, KANE-CHAN.
THE NEWS HAS HER LISTED AS PERSONALITY K OF MOIWAYAMA RADIO.

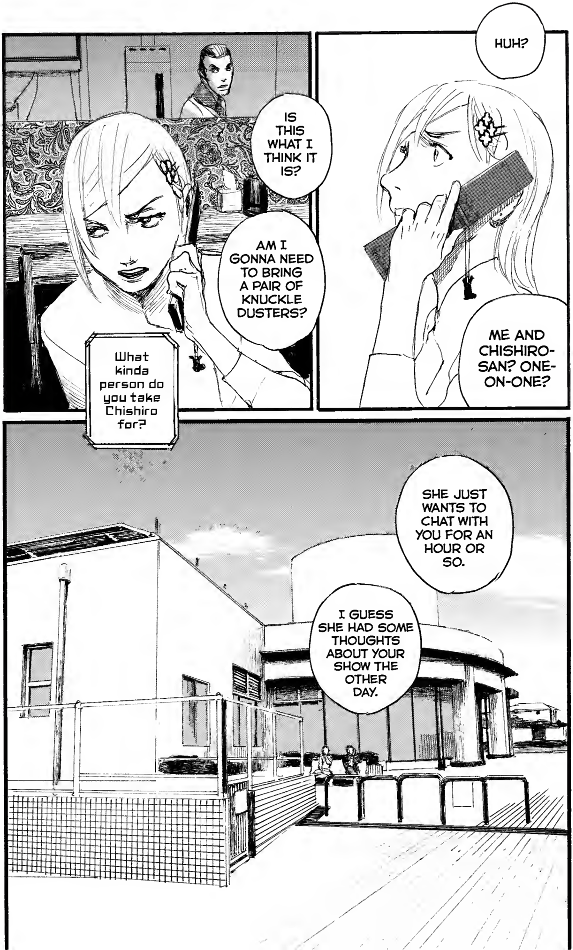

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT IT, PERSONALLY,
BUT THE HIGHER-UPS WON'T GET OFF MY BACK.
THEY'RE SAYING, "SINCE IT'S A SLOT WITH NO SPONSORS, CAN'T YOU GET SOMEONE A LITTLE MORE RESPECTABLE?"
YOU REALLY THINK IT'S A TIME A DECENT PERSON WOULD TAKE?
THERE YOU GO AGAIN, POUTING AND SHUTTING ME DOWN LIKE THAT.
AT ANY RATE...
...AS PER THE CONTRACT, I'M GONNA USE THE REMAINING MONTH HOWEVER I SEE FIT.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID YOU WANTED A YOUNG GIRL FOR LATE-NIGHT, KIKUKAWA-SAN.
HE HE.
I CAN'T TELL WHICH OF YOU IS THE PRODUCER.
DON'T BULLY KIKUKAWA-SAN TOO MUCH, MATO-SAN.

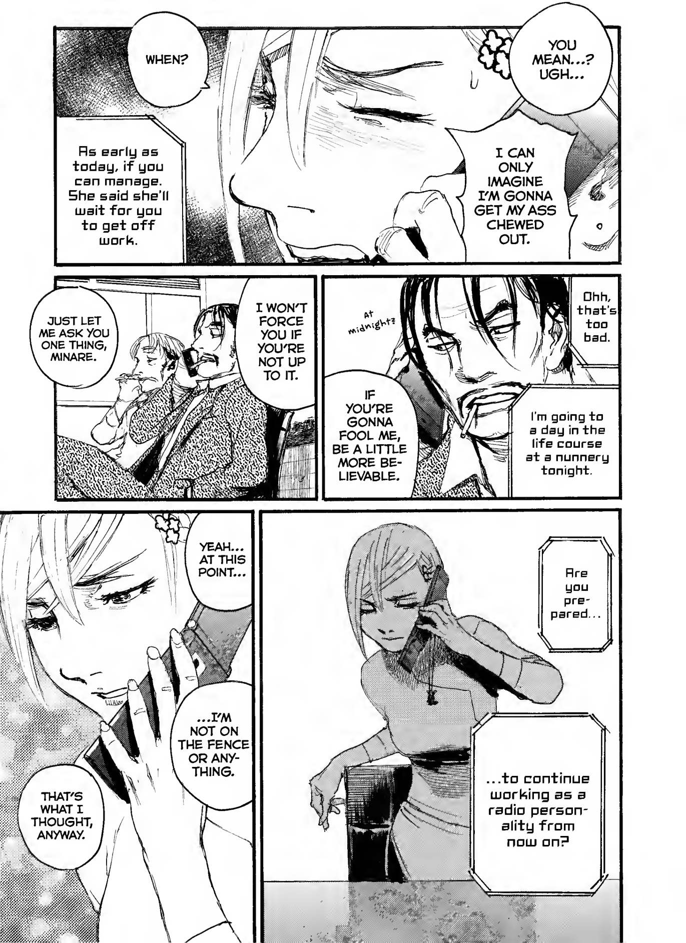

IT'S ALL THANKS TO KANE-CHAN THAT MY HAIR'S GONE.
STRESS ISN'T ENOUGH TO EXPLAIN THAT LEVEL OF...
HOLD UP.
MATO-SAN.
I LISTENED TO THIS.
AND I CAUGHT LAST NIGHT'S SHOW.
wave, listen to me
OH, YEAH?
WHAT'D YOU THINK?
WOULD YOU MIND...
...INTRODUCING ME TO THIS GIRL SOMETIME SOON?

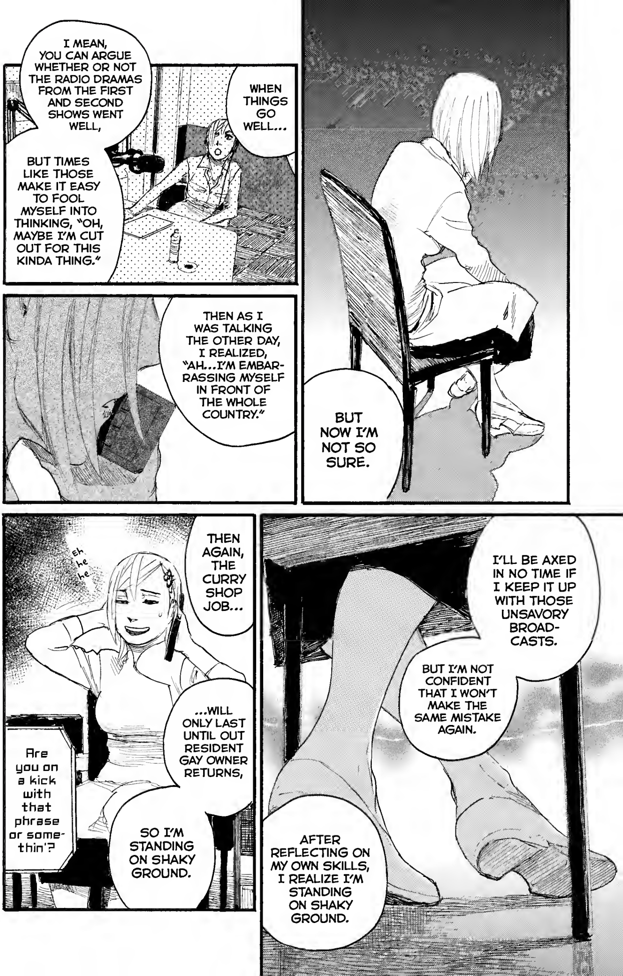
Chapter 24 「YAKITORI MUST NEVER BE REMOVED」

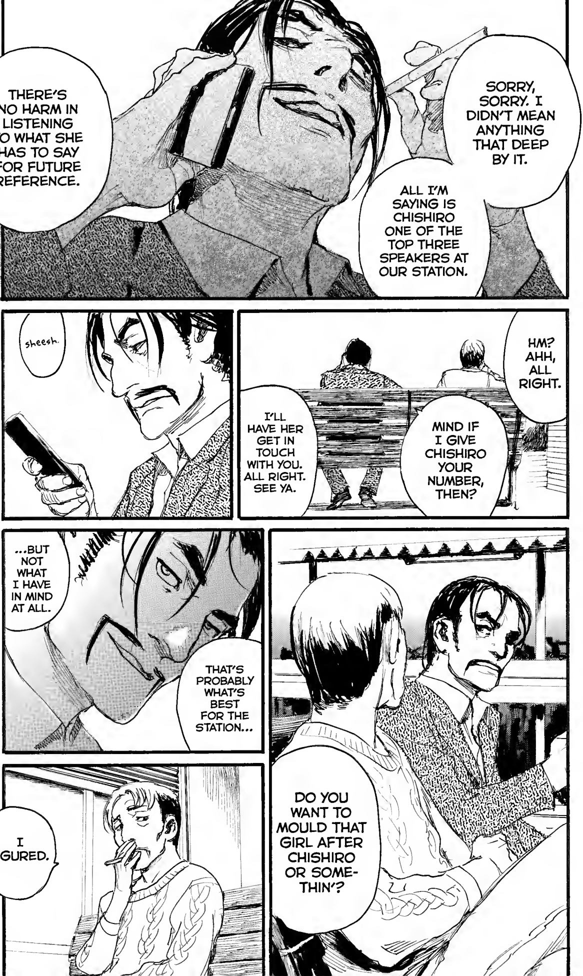

Y'KNOW, I KEEP FORGETTING AS SOON AS MY MIND WANDERS...
...BUT I WONDER WHAT TAKARADA-SAN'S UP TO.
BEATS ME.
HE'S PROBABLY INHALING OXYGEN AND EXHALING CARBON DIOXIDE, RIGHT?
COULD YOU ACT EVEN A LITTLE BIT INTERESTED?
WELL...
...I'M NOT IN ANY POSITION TO SAY THIS, BUT I'D LIKE IT IF THINGS COULD STAY THIS WAY FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER.
RIGHT? I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.
THAT OLD FART SHOULD JUST CONTRACT SOME UNKNOWN ILLNESS AND STAY IN THE HOSPITAL FOR ANOTHER TWO OR THREE YEARS.
I'M PRETTY SURE THAT'S NOT WHAT TACHIBANA-SAN MEANT.

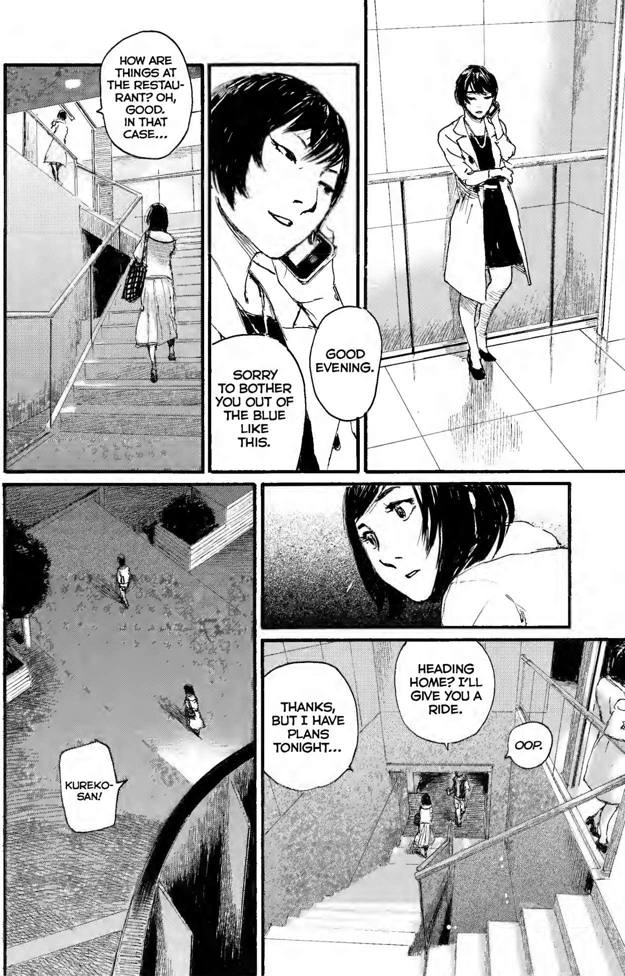

YOU SHOULD USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO OPEN YOUR OWN PLACE...
...THEN LEAVE THIS PLACE TOTALLY DESERTED BY THE TIME THE OWNER COMES BACK.
HA HA. I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.
BUT I'VE LEARNED A LOT IN THIS TIME.
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO RUN YOUR OWN RESTAURANT AND SUCH.
WILL YOU THINK OF A NAME FOR MY RESTAURANT, THEN, MINARE-SAN?
OH-HO. YOU GOT IT.
HOW ABOUT *HAINUWELE?*
IT'S THE NAME OF AN INDONESIAN GODDESS WHO POOPS GOLD.
USE THAT FOR THE NAME OF A CURRY RESTAURANT, HUH? I GET YA...
CHA CHARA CHAA CHAA CHA CHARA CHAA CHAA
HELLO, HELLO.
AHH. YEAH, I'M GOOD.

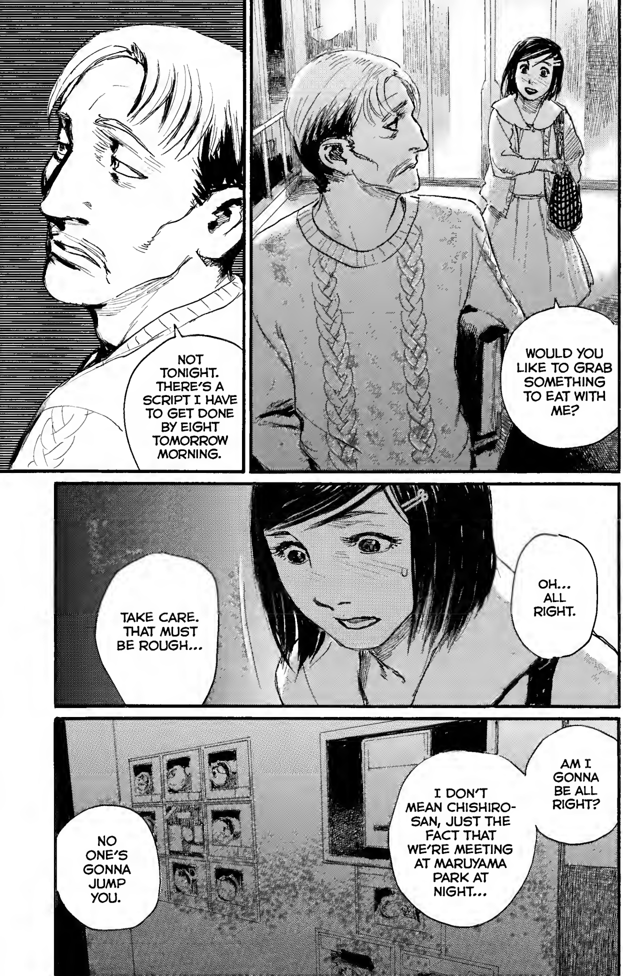

HUH?
ME AND CHISHIRO-SAN? ONE-ON-ONE?
IS THIS WHAT I THINK IT IS?
AM I GONNA NEED TO BRING A PAIR OF KNUCKLE DUSTERS?
What kinda person do you take Chishiro for?
SHE JUST WANTS TO CHAT WITH YOU FOR AN HOUR OR SO.
I GUESS SHE HAD SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR SHOW THE OTHER DAY.

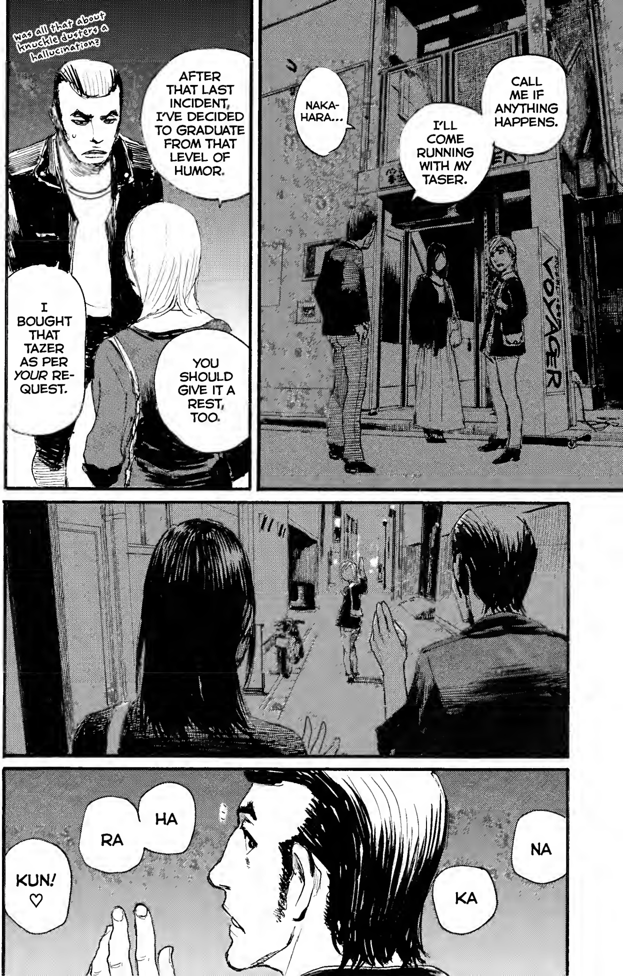

YOU MEAN...? UGH...
I CAN ONLY IMAGINE I'M GONNA GET MY ASS CHEWED OUT.
WHEN?
As early as today, if you can manage. She said she'll wait for you to get off work.
Ohh, that's too bad.
I'm going to a day in the life course at a nunnery tonight.
At midnight?
IF YOU'RE GONNA FOOL ME, BE A LITTLE MORE BELIEVABLE.
I WON'T FORCE YOU IF YOU'RE NOT UP TO IT.
JUST LET ME ASK YOU ONE THING, MINARE.
Are you prepared...
...to continue working as a radio personality from now on?
YEAH... AT THIS POINT...
...I'M NOT ON THE FENCE OR ANYTHING.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT, ANYWAY.

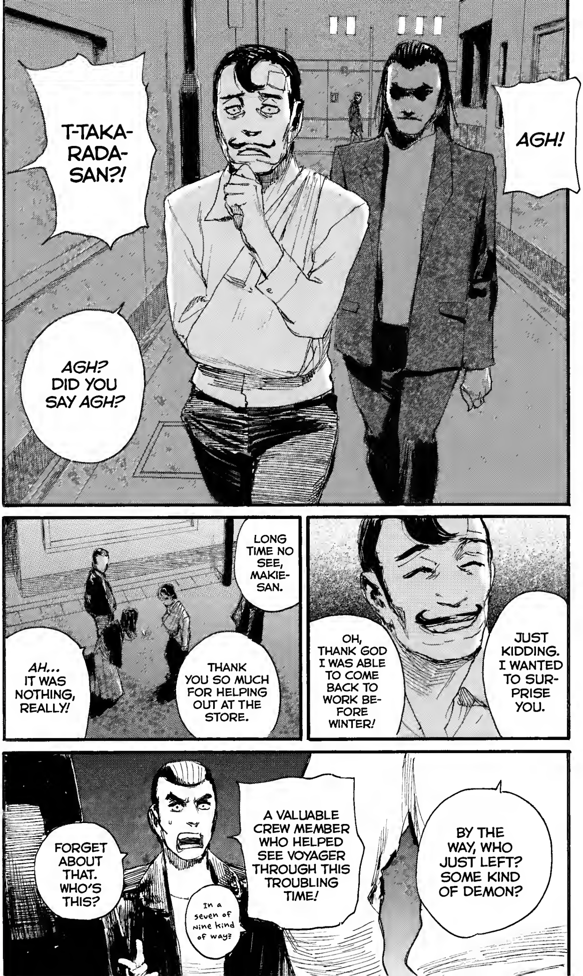

WHEN THINGS GO WELL...
I MEAN, YOU CAN ARGUE WHETHER OR NOT THE RADIO DRAMAS FROM THE FIRST AND SECOND SHOWS WENT WELL,
BUT TIMES LIKE THOSE MAKE IT EASY TO FOOL MYSELF INTO THINKING, "OH, MAYBE I'M CUT OUT FOR THIS KINDA THING."
THEN AS I WAS TALKING THE OTHER DAY, I REALIZED, "AH...I'M EMBARRASSING MYSELF IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE COUNTRY."
BUT NOW I'M NOT SO SURE.
I'LL BE AXED IN NO TIME IF I KEEP IT UP WITH THOSE UNSAVORY BROADCASTS.
BUT I'M NOT CONFIDENT THAT I WON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AGAIN.
AFTER REFLECTING ON MY OWN SKILLS, I REALIZE I'M STANDING ON SHAKY GROUND.
Eh he he
THEN AGAIN, THE CURRY SHOP JOB...
...WILL ONLY LAST UNTIL OUT RESIDENT GAY OWNER RETURNS,
SO I'M STANDING ON SHAKY GROUND.
Are you on a kick with that phrase or somethin'?

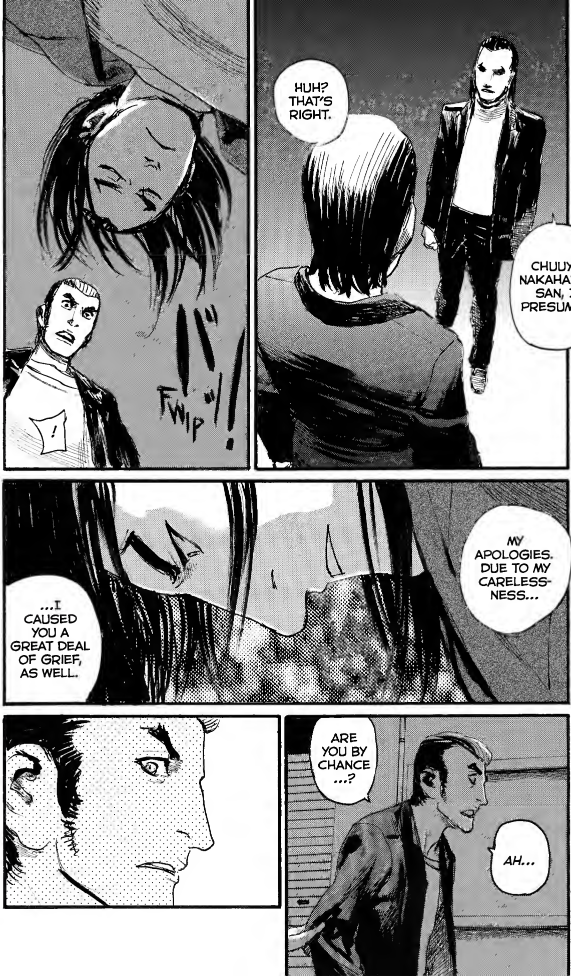

SORRY, SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING THAT DEEP BY IT.
ALL I'M SAYING IS CHISHIRO ONE OF THE TOP THREE SPEAKERS AT OUR STATION.
THERE'S NO HARM IN LISTENING TO WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.
HM? AHH, ALL RIGHT.
MIND IF I GIVE CHISHIRO YOUR NUMBER, THEN?
I'LL HAVE HER GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU. ALL RIGHT. SEE YA.
sheesh.
DO YOU WANT TO MOULD THAT GIRL AFTER CHISHIRO OR SOMETHIN'?
THAT'S PROBABLY WHAT'S BEST FOR THE STATION...
...BUT NOT WHAT I HAVE IN MIND AT ALL.
I FIGURED.

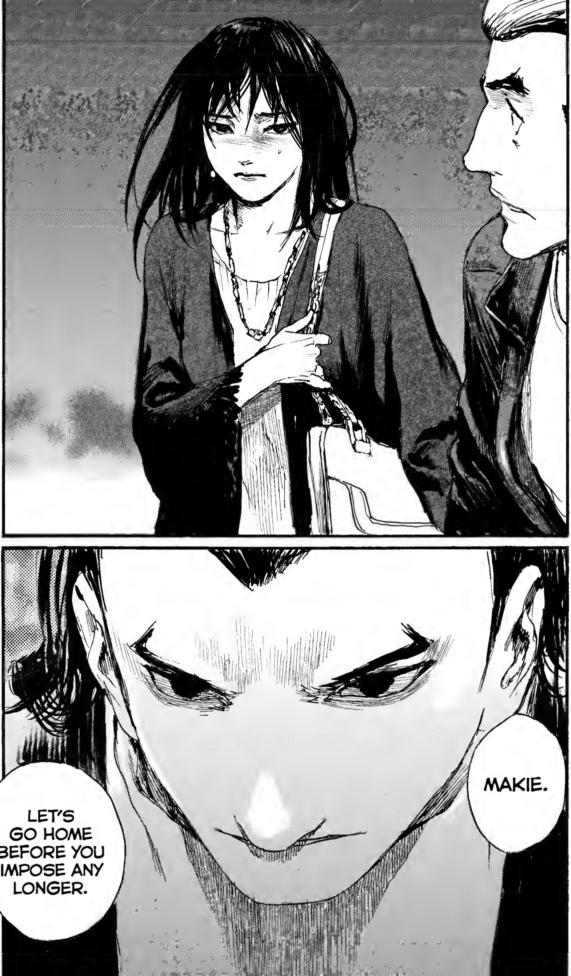

GOOD EVENING.
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU OUT OF THE BLUE LIKE THIS.
HOW ARE THINGS AT THE RESTAURANT? OH, GOOD. IN THAT CASE...
KUREKO-SAN!
OOP.
HEADING HOME? I'LL GIVE YOU A RIDE.
THANKS, BUT I HAVE PLANS TONIGHT...

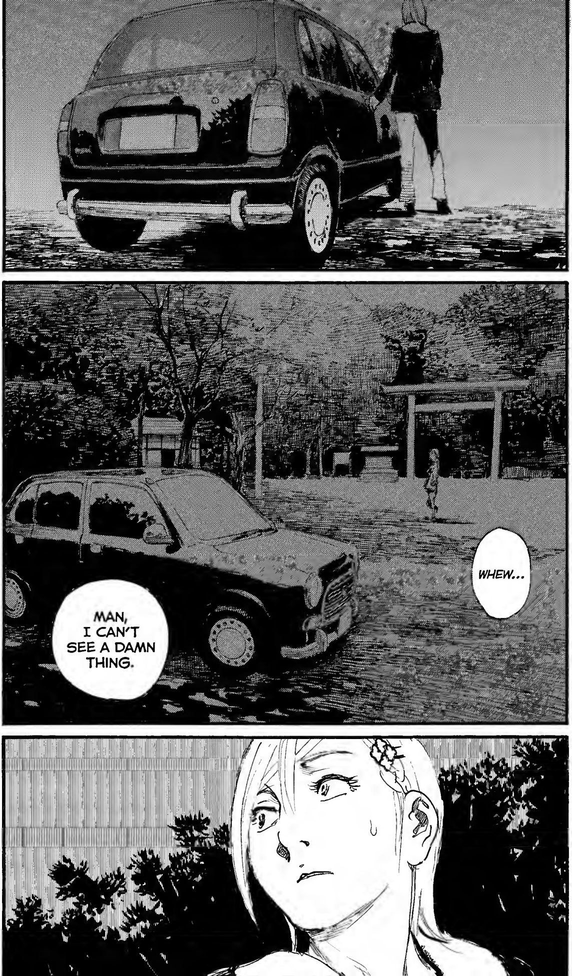

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GRAB SOMETHING TO EAT WITH ME?
NOT TONIGHT. THERE'S A SCRIPT I HAVE TO GET DONE BY EIGHT TOMORROW MORNING.
OH... ALL RIGHT.
TAKE CARE. THAT MUST BE ROUGH...
AM I GONNA BE ALL RIGHT?
I DON'T MEAN CHISHIRO-SAN, JUST THE FACT THAT WE'RE MEETING AT MARUYAMA PARK AT NIGHT...
NO ONE'S GONNA JUMP YOU.

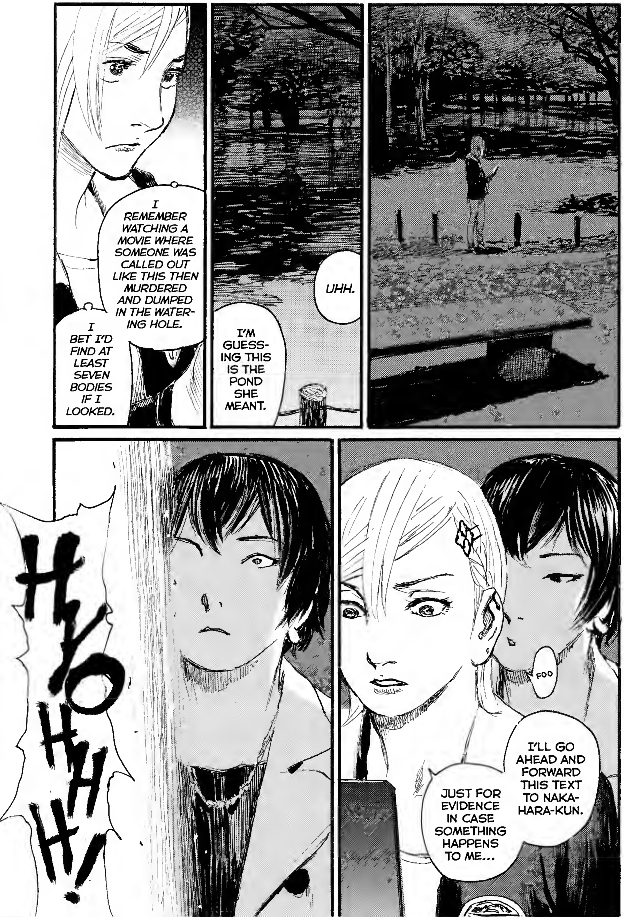

CALL ME IF ANYTHING HAPPENS.
I'LL COME RUNNING WITH MY TASER.
NAKA-HARA...
VOYAGER
was all that about knuckle dusters a hallucination?
AFTER THAT LAST INCIDENT, I'VE DECIDED TO GRADUATE FROM THAT LEVEL OF HUMOR.
YOU SHOULD GIVE IT A REST, TOO.
I BOUGHT THAT TAZER AS PER *YOUR* REQUEST.
NA
KA
HA
RA
KUN! ♡

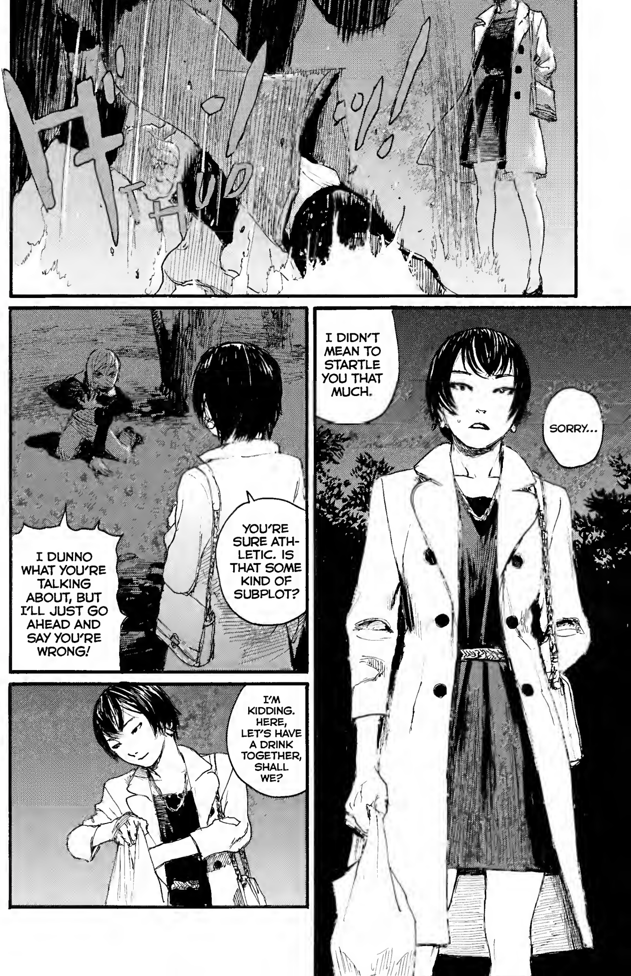

AGH!
T-TAKARADA-SAN?!
AGH? DID YOU SAY *AGH?*
JUST KIDDING. I WANTED TO SURPRISE YOU.
OH, THANK GOD I WAS ABLE TO COME BACK TO WORK BEFORE WINTER!
LONG TIME NO SEE, MAKIE-SAN.
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR HELPING OUT AT THE STORE.
AH... IT WAS NOTHING, REALLY!
BY THE WAY, WHO JUST LEFT? SOME KIND OF DEMON?
A VALUABLE CREW MEMBER WHO HELPED SEE VOYAGER THROUGH THIS TROUBLING TIME!
In a seven of Nine kind of way?
FORGET ABOUT THAT. WHO'S THIS?

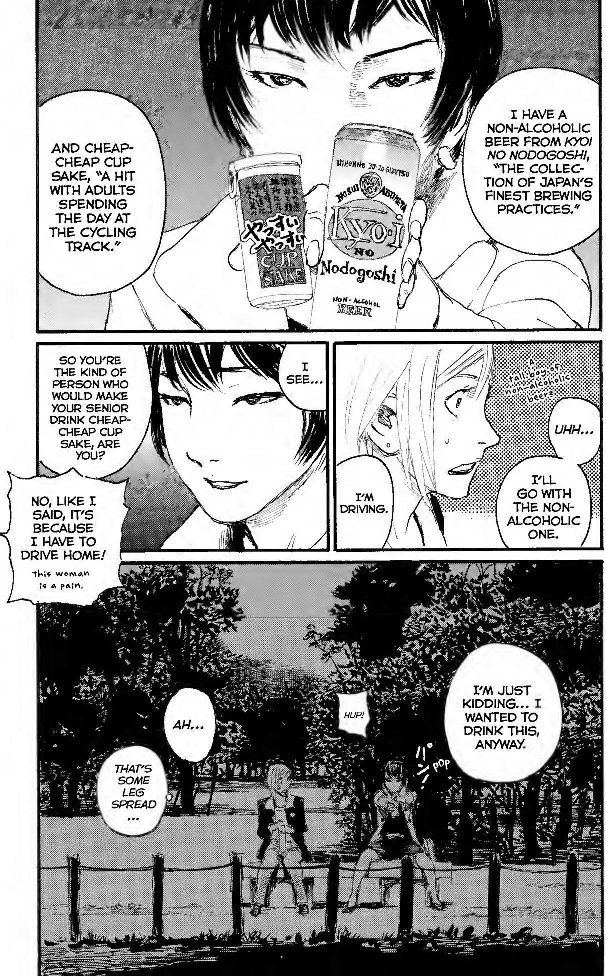

CHUUYA NAKAHARA-SAN, I PRESUME?
HUH? THAT'S RIGHT.
バ
FWIP
!
MY APOLOGIES. DUE TO MY CARELESSNESS...
...I CAUSED YOU A GREAT DEAL OF GRIEF, AS WELL.
ARE YOU BY CHANCE ...?
AH...

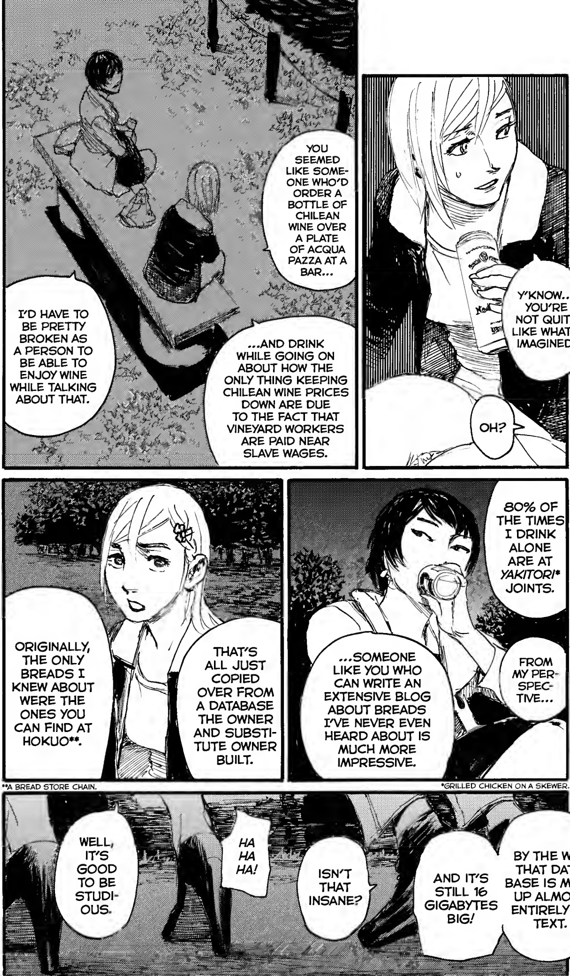

MAKIE.
LET'S GO HOME BEFORE YOU IMPOSE ANY LONGER.


WHEW...
MAN, I CAN'T SEE A DAMN THING.


UHH.
I'M GUESSING THIS IS THE POND SHE MEANT.
I REMEMBER WATCHING A MOVIE WHERE SOMEONE WAS CALLED OUT LIKE THIS THEN MURDERED AND DUMPED IN THE WATERING HOLE.
I BET I'D FIND AT LEAST SEVEN BODIES IF I LOOKED.
FOO
I'LL GO AHEAD AND FORWARD THIS TEXT TO NAKAHARA-KUN.
JUST FOR EVIDENCE IN CASE SOMETHING HAPPENS TO ME...
HYOHHHH!

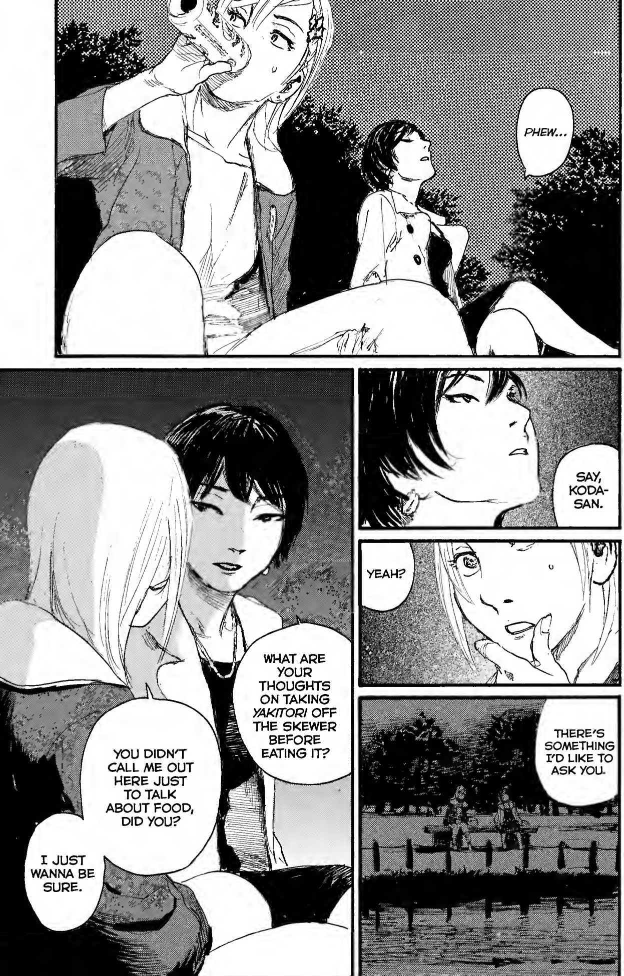

ドザッ!!
THUD
SORRY...
I DIDN'T MEAN TO STARTLE YOU THAT MUCH.
YOU'RE SURE ATHLETIC. IS THAT SOME KIND OF SUBPLOT?
I DUNNO WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, BUT I'LL JUST GO AHEAD AND SAY YOU'RE WRONG!
I'M KIDDING. HERE, LET'S HAVE A DRINK TOGETHER, SHALL WE?

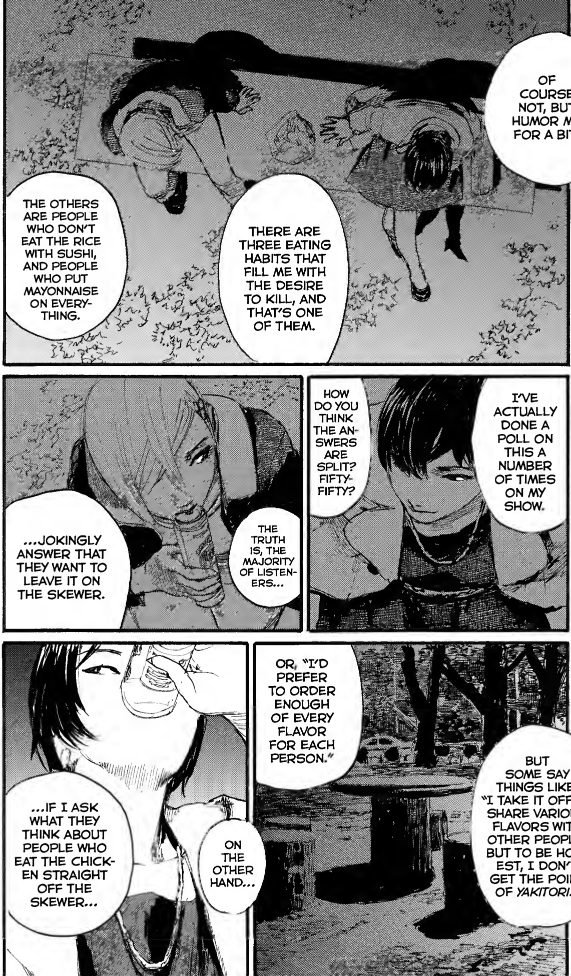

I HAVE A NON-ALCOHOLIC BEER FROM *KYOI NO NODOGOSHI*, "THE COLLECTION OF JAPAN'S FINEST BREWING PRACTICES."
NIHONNO JO-ZO GIZUTSU
NOSUI ATSUMETA
Kyo-i NO Nodogoshi
NON-ALCOHOL BEER
やっすい やっすい CUP SAKE
AND CHEAP-CHEAP CUP SAKE, "A HIT WITH ADULTS SPENDING THE DAY AT THE CYCLING TRACK."
A tall-boy of non-alcoholic beerz
UHH...
I'LL GO WITH THE NON-ALCOHOLIC ONE.
I'M DRIVING.
I SEE...
SO YOU'RE THE KIND OF PERSON WHO WOULD MAKE YOUR SENIOR DRINK CHEAP-CHEAP CUP SAKE, ARE YOU?
NO, LIKE I SAID, IT'S BECAUSE I HAVE TO DRIVE HOME!
This woman is a pain.
I'M JUST KIDDING... I WANTED TO DRINK THIS, ANYWAY.
pop
HUP!
AH...
THAT'S SOME LEG SPREAD...

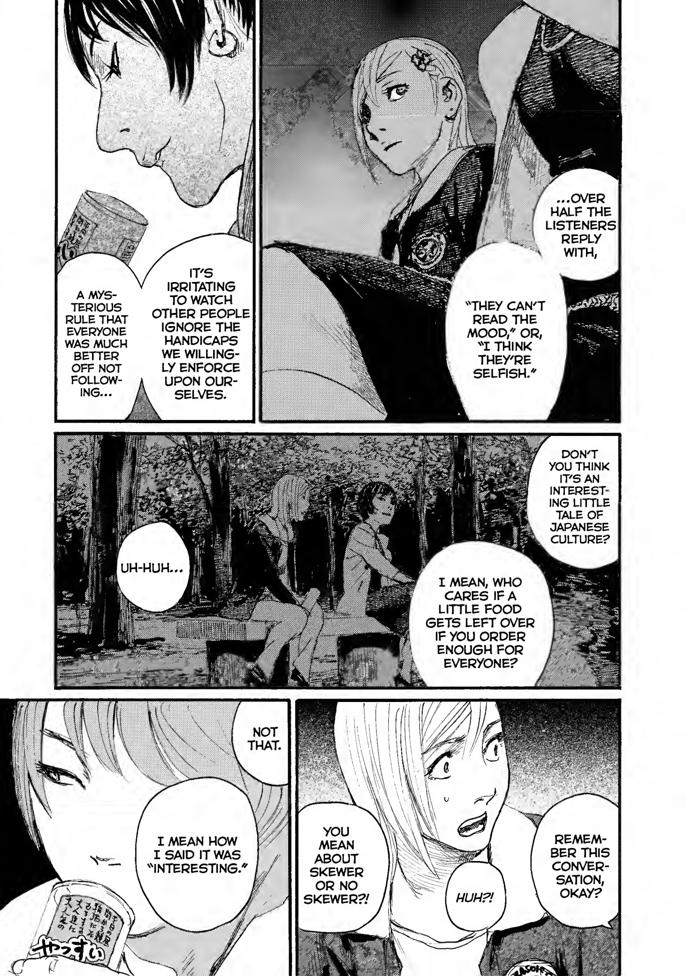

Y'KNOW... YOU'RE NOT QUITE LIKE WHAT I IMAGINED.
OH?
YOU SEEMED LIKE SOMEONE WHO'D ORDER A BOTTLE OF CHILEAN WINE OVER A PLATE OF ACQUA PAZZA AT A BAR...
...AND DRINK WHILE GOING ON ABOUT HOW THE ONLY THING KEEPING CHILEAN WINE PRICES DOWN ARE DUE TO THE FACT THAT VINEYARD WORKERS ARE PAID NEAR SLAVE WAGES.
I'D HAVE TO BE PRETTY BROKEN AS A PERSON TO BE ABLE TO ENJOY WINE WHILE TALKING ABOUT THAT.
80% OF THE TIMES I DRINK ALONE ARE AT *YAKITORI** JOINTS.
FROM MY PERSPECTIVE...
...SOMEONE LIKE YOU WHO CAN WRITE AN EXTENSIVE BLOG ABOUT BREADS I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD ABOUT IS MUCH MORE IMPRESSIVE.
THAT'S ALL JUST COPIED OVER FROM A DATABASE THE OWNER AND SUBSTITUTE OWNER BUILT.
ORIGINALLY, THE ONLY BREADS I KNEW ABOUT WERE THE ONES YOU CAN FIND AT HOKUO**.
BY THE WAY, THAT DATABASE IS MADE UP ALMOST ENTIRELY OF TEXT.
AND IT'S STILL 16 GIGABYTES BIG!
ISN'T THAT INSANE?
HA HA HA!
WELL, IT'S GOOD TO BE STUDIOUS.

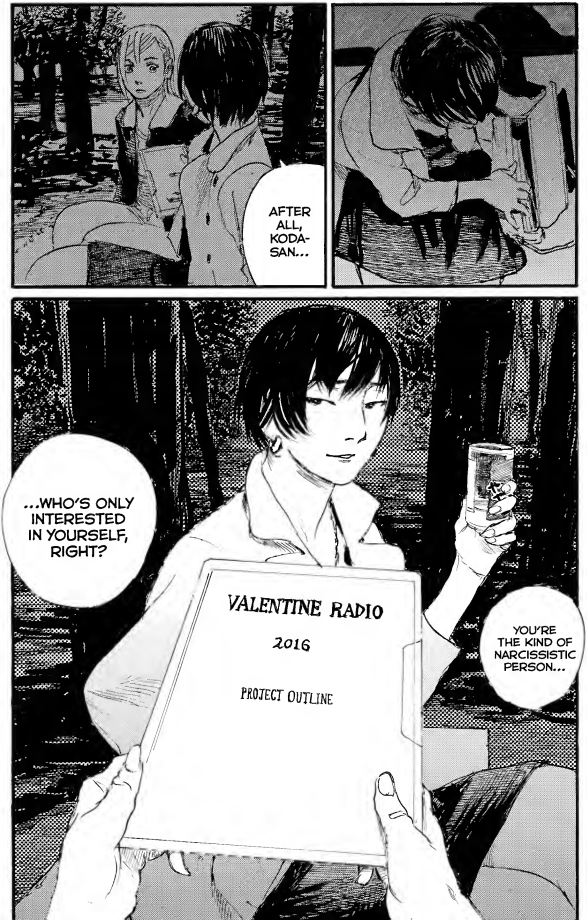
*GRILLED CHICKEN ON A SKEWER.

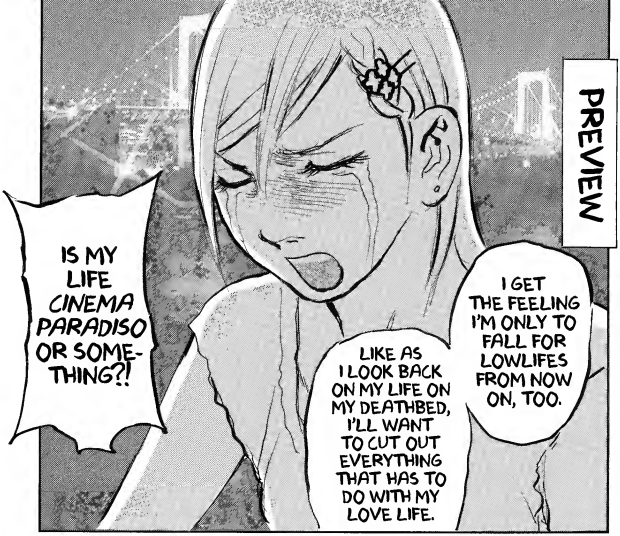
**A BREAD STORE CHAIN.


PHEW...
SAY, KODA-SAN.
YEAH?
THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU.
WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON TAKING *YAKITORI* OFF THE SKEWER BEFORE EATING IT?
YOU DIDN'T CALL ME OUT HERE JUST TO TALK ABOUT FOOD, DID *YOU*?
I JUST WANNA BE SURE.


OF COURSE NOT, BUT HUMOR ME FOR A BIT.
THERE ARE THREE EATING HABITS THAT FILL ME WITH THE DESIRE TO KILL, AND THAT'S ONE OF THEM.
THE OTHERS ARE PEOPLE WHO DON'T EAT THE RICE WITH SUSHI, AND PEOPLE WHO PUT MAYONNAISE ON EVERYTHING.
I'VE ACTUALLY DONE A POLL ON THIS A NUMBER OF TIMES ON MY SHOW.
HOW DO YOU THINK THE ANSWERS ARE SPLIT? FIFTY-FIFTY?
THE TRUTH IS, THE MAJORITY OF LISTENERS...
...JOKINGLY ANSWER THAT THEY WANT TO LEAVE IT ON THE SKEWER.
BUT SOME SAY THINGS LIKE, "I TAKE IT OFF TO SHARE VARIOUS FLAVORS WITH OTHER PEOPLE, BUT TO BE HONEST, I DON'T GET THE POINT OF *YAKITORI*."
OR, "I'D PREFER TO ORDER ENOUGH OF EVERY FLAVOR FOR EACH PERSON."
ON THE OTHER HAND...
...IF I ASK WHAT THEY THINK ABOUT PEOPLE WHO EAT THE CHICKEN STRAIGHT OFF THE SKEWER...


...OVER HALF THE LISTENERS REPLY WITH,
"THEY CAN'T READ THE MOOD," OR, "I THINK THEY'RE SELFISH."
IT'S IRRITATING TO WATCH OTHER PEOPLE IGNORE THE HANDICAPS WE WILLINGLY ENFORCE UPON OURSELVES.
A MYSTERIOUS RULE THAT EVERYONE WAS MUCH BETTER OFF NOT FOLLOWING...
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S AN INTERESTING LITTLE TALE OF JAPANESE CULTURE?
I MEAN, WHO CARES IF A LITTLE FOOD GETS LEFT OVER IF YOU ORDER ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE?
UH-HUH...
REMEMBER THIS CONVERSATION, OKAY?
HUH?!
YOU MEAN ABOUT SKEWER OR NO SKEWER?!
NOT THAT.
I MEAN HOW I SAID IT WAS "INTERESTING."
やっすい


AFTER ALL, KODA-SAN...
YOU'RE THE KIND OF NARCISSISTIC PERSON...
...WHO'S ONLY INTERESTED IN YOURSELF, RIGHT?
VALENTINE RADIO
2016
PROJECT OUTLINE


PREVIEW
I GET THE FEELING I'M ONLY TO FALL FOR LOWLIFES FROM NOW ON, TOO.
LIKE AS I LOOK BACK ON MY LIFE ON MY DEATHBED, I'LL WANT TO CUT OUT EVERYTHING THAT HAS TO DO WITH MY LOVE LIFE.
IS MY LIFE CINEMA PARADISO OR SOMETHING?!

AFTERWORD

Greetings, everyone. How did you like this third volume of the off-the-rails occult curry radio manga *Wave, Listen to me*? Hm? Romance? That's got nothing to do with me. Am I really obligated to pump every volume full of love affairs? Think about Japan's birth rate. It's the lowest of every developed country, right? That makes me think you're all not as interested in love as you say you are! ...So, I checked Google, and while it appears birth rate numbers continue to drop, the total fertility rate (number of children a woman gives birth to in her life) has been slowly rising since 2005. Hmm. By the way, Hokkaido is #45 out of 47 on the list of prefectural fertility rates. The lowest being, of course, Tokyo. I see...well, what I'm trying to say, everyone, is "Wikipedia sure is neat, huh?" Oh, yes. Speaking of Hokkaido, you might remember how in the last volume's afterword I mentioned that I changed my abbreviation of Seico Mart from Seico to Seicoma after being corrected by readers, then received mail from other readers saying it's actually Secoma. Well, apparently, the parent company of Seico Mart officially made the abbreviation Secoma recently. Upon further research, in addition to Seicoma and Secoma, I found other uncommon abbreviations including "Seima" and "Mart." Mart, huh? Well, see you again in volume four. Hiroaki Samura

Wave, Listen to Me! 3

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English digital edition published by Kodansha Advanced Media, LLC, San Francisco.

www.kodanshacomics.com

ISBN: 9781682336823

Digital Edition: 1.0.0

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YKS Services LLC/SKY Japan, INC.